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Contents

April 2016

FEATURES

46 Player biography
Antoine Griezmann

56 Club focus
Sporting Clube de Portugal

70 Profile
Thomas Tuchel

THE WORLD THIS MONTH

People in the news...on and off the pitch

4 In pictures
10 **Keir Radnedge** FIFA's new president
16 **From the editor**
19 **Ronnie McFall** end of an era
20 **Francesco Totti** big decision looming
22 **Paul Gardner** end keeper protection
23 **Ins & outs** people on the move
24 **Brian Glanville** Wenger should be history

EYEWITNESS

26 Gibraltar!
30 Argentina
34 Nepal

SPECIAL FEATURE

38 Football's most wanted

TACTICS

54 Hodgson's dilemma

6 OF THE BEST

66 Emerging stars of Euro 2016

TALENT SCOUT

76 Scandinavians

ARCHIVES

78 April 1964

REVIEWS

80 Base layers

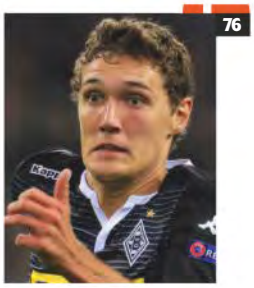
THE GREAT MATCHES

98 Benfica v Real Madrid, 1962

24

34

66



76

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88

85 **France** Benzema set to return
86 **Cuba** defections may improve game
88 **Russia** Rostov are doing a Leicester
90 **Nigeria** Oliseh quits Super Eagles

PLUS 84 Global diary 92 ESM XI 94 Golden Shoe 95 Results, tables, fixtures 96 Squads

In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

SWITZERLAND... amateur players from Switzerland and Italy play on the Allalin glacier in Saas-Fee ahead of the Euro 2016 Mountain Villages tournament

SPAIN...Atletico Madrid's Gabi at the end of his side's penalty shoot-out victory against PSV

ARGENTINA... Boca Juniors and Racing play behind closed doors at the Bombonera

ITALY...Luca Rigoni of Genoa is sandwiched between Udinese's Emil Hallfredsson and Duvan Zapata

SERBIA...anti-riot police stand guard as Red Star fans burn torches during the Belgrade derby with Partizan

TURKEY...a Fenerbahce fan prior to his club's Europa League game against Benfica

USA...Dallas celebrate after scoring against Philadelphia Union

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FIFA ELECTION

A NEW ERA FOR FIFA?

With his promises of extra cash for members, Gianni Infantino beat favourite Sheikh Salman to clinch the FIFA presidential election. Keir Radnedge reports from Zurich

FIFA turned a crucial page when the extraordinary congress in Zurich elected Gianni Infantino as president. Even so, a stream of bleak headlines will continue to flow down over the next years as American and Swiss criminal investigations plough on, and as more grisly details emerge about the length, depth and breadth of corruption, fraud, money-laundering and general rip-offs of the game's riches.

Infantino's victory over Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa was greeted outside the congress hall with, at best, a grudging sense of relief.

A 45-year-old Swiss replacing an 80-year-old Swiss does not guarantee a change of culture. It will take several years in practical terms before the structural reforms kick in and, if they achieve the intended effect, more years beyond that before the culture and image begin to turn.

> A 45-year-old Swiss replacing an 80-year-old Swiss does not guarantee a change of culture

Cynics and sceptics have every right to sit tight and pick holes in whatever FIFA does, in every future faux pas or misjudgement or misdemeanour. This is the legacy of the Sepp Blatter era and the burden cannot be cast off so easily.

At least Infantino can point to clear water between himself and Blatter after a final line was drawn beneath the latter's 18-year reign.

Infantino has spent most of the past decade working for UEFA, along the road in Nyon. He did not serve on the executive committee under Blatter, as did election rivals Sheikh Salman and Prince Ali bin Al Hussein; he was not a long-term employee of Blatter, as was Jerome Champagne; and he did not owe Blatter his senior roles on two high-profile committees, as did Tokyo Sexwale.

Certainly Infantino worked closely with Michel Platini who, like Blatter, is fighting an ethics suspension at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. But no one has yet suggested why the sins of the old boss should be visited upon his now former general-secretary.

If anything, Infantino made Platini look too good as it was Infantino who took Platini ploys – such as expanded access to the Champions League, financial fairplay and a pan-continental Euro 2020 – and devised ways to make them work.

He was then a member of FIFA's resurrected reform committee, under Swiss lawyer Francois Carrard, so he has a detailed knowledge of the roadmap by which his presidency must be judged. This is, of course, as long as he does not become derailed by the mind-bending, luxury trappings of office, the perks and the privileges.

For instance, in Rio de Janeiro in August, Infantino's fledgling status as head of the governing body of the world's greatest sport will see him elected in as a new member of the International Olympic Committee, which will elevate him among some of the most supremely self-regarding individuals in world sport.

Infantino did not head into election as favourite. That status hovered around Sheikh Salman, the Bahraini head of the Asian confederation. He and Infantino had circumnavigated the world three times

Assurance...USSF president Sunil Gulati (left) threw his support behind Gianni Infantino in the second round

Winner...Congress members applaud the new president

over in three months in pursuit of votes and Salman's aides were predicting up to 117 votes in the first round.

This would not have been enough for a two-thirds knockout success but it would be a decisive signal of momentum for Salman and for his powerful backer Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah, head of a string of Olympic bodies as well as a fellow FIFA ExCo member.

The human rights allegations, concerning Sheikh Salman's role in the Bahrain crackdown in 2011, had been a persistent irritant without being a vote loser, as FIFA associations circle the wagons when one of their own is under fire from the world at large and the western media in general.

Infantino had promised an expansion of development cash and a 40-team World Cup; Sheikh Salman sneered at both. He portrayed himself as the agent of responsibility, if not austerity, but he had nothing to offer. No lure, no vision, no dream. Most important, as it turned out, no incentive.

Indeed, his suggestion that development cash might be cut back went down, in the

Defeated...Bahraini supporters of Sheikh Salman

minnow half of FIFA's membership, like a lead balloon. For dozens of national associations, cash injections from the financial aid and Goal projects add up to the difference between existence and extinction.

The day before the vote, all five candidates trailed round the conferences of the five confederations (Asia was in self-sealed lockdown) expounding their policies and manifestos. They all had 15 minutes on stage at congress to drive home their messages again.

Sheikh Salman's address was woolly and without substance. He had promised a surprise. The only surprise was that he appeared to have nothing left in the tank.

Infantino capitalised, minutes later, by delivering a fatal thrust in reminding delegates that FIFA's money was "your money". The hall liked that. Suddenly the mood changed. Suddenly Infantino was no longer the over-smart polyglot "little European", an official, a stand-in, a Plan B, not really one of them.

As Kozho Tashima, the FIFA ExCo member who is the new president of the Japanese FA, said: "At that moment in congress hall I really felt that something changed. I looked around and I believe that other delegates were also affected by it too. It was a very important moment."

Japan was among a group of East Asian nations who had been claimed, before the vote, as Sheikh Salman loyalists. But such promises last only as long as the first round. Infantino, to an audible vote of appreciation, led Salman 88-85 after the opening salvo, followed by Prince Ali on 27 and Champagne on seven, with Sexwale having already withdrawn before the vote.

> "I really felt something had changed. I looked around and felt other delegates were affected by it too"
> Japan FA president Kozho Tashima on Infantino's Congress address

Waverers in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Oceania, all saw which way the wind was blowing and switched sides. But the most decisive switch was that of the United States, whose Department of Justice had played such a key role in bringing FIFA to this watershed.

Sunil Gulati, the USSF president, had been a progressive ally of Prince Ali on the FIFA ExCo up until the Jordanian's eviction by Sheikh Salman last year. Hence Gulati had promised the first US vote to Prince Ali. But then, as Gulati said later: "We had assured Gianni that when it mattered, if it mattered, we would be with him."

Address...Infantino talks to the media

Gulati and his lawyer worked the floor assiduously for Infantino; more intently than the Europeans. They had supported Infantino out of continental loyalty but not out of belief or love.

For Infantino, having led after the first round was huge. It brought him credibility in his own right for perhaps the first time in a campaign he had entered, formally, just one day before the deadline. It also sent out a message to supporters of Prince Ali and Champagne that this was the winning bandwagon to jump aboard.

He needed 104 votes for a simple majority. In the event he grossed 115 to Sheikh Salman's 96, with Prince Ali seven and Champagne none.

Infantino was almost overcome. He had seen the reforms approved. Now he had been elected to carry them through. The campaign was tough. Defying all FIFA's enemies will be tougher still.

Congratulations... Infantino is greeted by defeated rival Sheikh Salman

INFANTINO, THE MAN

New FIFA boss will call on legal background for series of new challenges in Zurich

Gianni Infantino has been making headlines all his life. When he was only four days old he was on the front page of a Swiss newspaper because he needed a life-saving transfusion.

He says: "I needed a blood transfusion at birth which caused a huge problem. They had to make an appeal to the Red Cross for a match and they found one donor in Belgrade and one in Bristol. It was flown to Zurich and brought by road to Brig.

"So, as a baby I had to fight for my life and that saved me. It was the first time I made the front pages."

Not the last, of course. On February 27, the day after Infantino won the FIFA presidential election, Swiss papers blasted "FIFantino" across their front pages.

Coincidentally, Infantino's first formal trip as FIFA president saw him fly to Bristol – with budget airline EasyJet rather than Sepp Blatter's preference for private jet – for the annual meeting of the International Football Association Board.

"It was the best option," said Infantino. "We are normal people and we have to behave like normal people. Obviously, there will be occasions when I might need to take a private plane, if I have to go to three countries in one day, but everyone in FIFA should be working to optimise the costs. We have to send the right signals."

> "I don't always have to go to a match in a suit and tie. We need to become more like fans and less like politicians"

Even FIFA's dress sense will become more relaxed under Infantino. He says: "I don't always have to go to a match wearing a suit and tie. I think we need to change this and become, on our side as the leaders of the game, a bit more like fans and a bit less like politicians."

He proved the point with a tieless appearance at a women in football conference at the Home of FIFA and also for the Swansea-Norwich match which he took in after the IFAB date.

The lawmakers' meeting, in Cardiff, approved the concept of tests for video assistance for referees, an easing of the "triple punishment" and an approval of a major revision of the laws of the game.

All this provided Infantino with ideal evidence to support his campaign slogan of wanting "to bring FIFA back to football rather than politics".

Infantino, from an Italian immigrant family, studied law at Fribourg, and he and Lebanese wife Leena have four daughters. The eldest twins were born the day after the death of Infantino's father in 2003.

Looking back, Infantino says: "I had the football virus injected into me when I was a kid from my parents and my father in particular.

"My first memories are of the 1978 World Cup when I was eight and watched on TV with my father. I remember Bertoni and Kempes in the Final against the Netherlands. I remember the Italian team too, who started so well with new players like Rossi and Cabrini. Then the 1982 World Cup in Spain, where Italy won, was a strong experience for a 12-year-old boy.

"I saw this strong experience still during the World Cup in Brazil two years ago.

"If you live in Switzerland and take your kids to school then you have all the mothers and fathers speaking about the World Cup from following their own teams: English, Algerians, Swiss, Germans. We see, in these circumstances, the importance of the World Cup and why we have to protect the World Cup in particular."

In the meantime, his career followed a steady upward path. Infantino, who speaks Italian, French, German, English, Spanish and Arabic, worked first as secretary-general of the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) at the University of Neuchatel.

He moved to UEFA in August 2000 and, in 2004, became director of legal affairs and club licensing. This was an ideal platform for promotion to deputy general secretary in 2007 and then the top job in 2009.

Infantino proved a dedicated administrative support for president Michel Platini though he could not escape the shadow of controversy which is par for the course for every high-profile football official. For Infantino this concerned UEFA's apparently contradictory approaches to match-fixing cases in Turkey and Greece. Anger and resentment burns on among many Turkish fans.

He likes to go jogging before a hard day's work, a healthcare concern which enabled him to make good – two days after becoming FIFA president – by playing in a celebrity friends' football match on one of the pitches alongside the FIFA bunker.

Then it was back to facing the world's media again, a role at which Infantino is well practised.

More and more, as time went on at UEFA, Platini preferred to give the reporting horde a miss and leave Infantino to take the press conferences after executive meetings and other conferences.

Platini's tactic cost him media sympathy

FACT FILE

Giovanni Vincenzo Infantino
Born: March 23, 1970 (Brig, Switzerland)
Nationality: Swiss/Italian
Previous positions: Secretary-general of the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) University of Neuchatel; UEFA director of legal affairs and club licensing (2000-2004); Deputy general secretary (2007-09); general secretary (2009-16)

Watching brief... Infantino took in the Swansea-Norwich game after an IFAB meeting in Wales

but helped prepare Infantino for the job ahead, one which fell his way by luck rather than judgment. He was pushed forward on FIFA deadline day only as UEFA's Plan B after Platini's FIFA ambitions were derailed by the revelation of that infamous "disloyal payment" from Blatter and subsequent suspension.

Blatter, as executive president at FIFA, was also top of the pay scale. But Infantino, in a presidency restricted by the reforms, will be paid less than his new chief executive. Not that Infantino is prepared to concede either status or authority.

He says: "I do not think that I have been chosen by FIFA Congress to be an ambassador. I have been elected by the Congress to be a leader, not to be the deputy of the general secretary.

"A lot of people are relying on me to bring FIFA and football into a new era."

Reforms which Infantino must lead include replacing the executive committee with a 36-member FIFA Council – including a minimum of six women – and limiting the president and other top officials to three terms of four years. Commercial decisions will be taken by the professional staff and not by the council. He says: "The reforms need to be implemented now so that, very soon, we can concentrate on football. As for the past, we have to make sure we co-operate fully with the authorities to make sure everything comes out if something has happened.

"The sponsors need to regain trust and confidence in FIFA and, if we can achieve this, then revenue streams will increase and FIFA will not have to worry about the future.

"I have vast experience in this area. My track record shows that UEFA didn't go bankrupt; on the contrary, revenue increased."

Infantino is determined to promote an increase of women's participation in the game at all levels, an increase in the number of World Cup slots to 40 and a start sooner rather than later on the bidding process for the 2026 host.

He says: "I believe in this increase in the number of teams at the World Cup. We will not only give eight more countries the possibility to participate but give many more the dream to participate. This will boost the development of football as well as its popularity in many countries."

Infantino is a self-confident individual. But he may not find the personal journey from Nyon to Zurich an entirely comfortable one. Blatter admitted he struggled to make the transition from general secretary to president. In the one role he was surrounded by "mere" fellow workers; in the other he found himself smothered by sycophants.

Embrace...Infantino with his wife Leena

"I know what I have to do and how I want to do it, to start implementing some of the changes," says Infantino, keeping his eye – initially at least – on the job in hand.

"I'm confident I will be able to ease into my new role very soon. But it's not the role that makes the person, it's the person who makes the role. I am a worker and I will remain so, I will push everyone from the administration to the council to the stakeholders to the limits of what is possible.

"Sepp Blatter characterised one era at FIFA. I hope that I will characterise a different era."

So does all the rest of football.

Grass roots... FIFA's new president has former Spain defender Michel Salgado taking cover as he celebrates his first day in office with a friendly game

PAYBACK TIME

FIFA claims against discredited former officials, including Webb, Blazer and Warner

FIFA is to pursue Jeffrey Webb and the other FIFAGate crooks through the United States courts for "tens of millions of dollars" in restitution and damages.

Webb was a vice-president of the world federation, and head of central and north American confederation CONCACAF, when he and six other football high-flyers were arrested in Zurich last May ahead of extradition to the US.

The 51-year-old Cayman Islands banker is now among 42 individuals and companies indicted by the United States Department of Justice on charges of fraud and money laundering to the tune of around $200million from commercial revenues generated by CONCACAF and South America's CONMEBOL.

Lawyers acting for FIFA have applied to the US Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of New York to reclaim monies forfeited by those who have pleaded guilty to – and those yet to be convicted of – corruption on an industrial scale.

FIFA has been ascribed victim status by both the US DoJ and the Swiss authorities, who are undertaking their own probe into the awarding of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to Russia and Qatar.

So far a dozen senior football officials and marketing executives have pleaded guilty to FIFAGate charges, accepted forfeiture orders and been bailed while they await sentence. These include Webb, who has agreed to forfeit more than $6.7m; Chuck Blazer, former CONCACAF general secretary and FIFA ExCo member, forfeiting $1.958m; Daryan Warner, son and associate of ex-CONCACAF president Jack Warner, forfeiting $1.177m; and Jose Hawilla, Brazilian marketing magnate, forfeiting a whopping $151.713m.

FIFA's victim statement and request for restitution pulled no punches, saying: "The accused, with their sordid misconduct, had deeply tarnished the FIFA brand... betrayed their duties and sold their powers to the highest bidder."

The 22-page document claimed the defendants had "grossly abused positions of trust to enrich themselves, while causing large financial losses as well as damage to FIFA's reputation, intellectual property and business relationships".

Defendants such as Jack Warner and Blazer had conspired with Hawilla's Traffic USA to siphon off commercial revenues. Warner had further betrayed the trust of his position by arranging to sell World Cup bid votes to Morocco (re 1998) and then South Africa (re 2010).

Warner senior quit FIFA in 2011 after the Mohamed Bin Hammam presidential election scandal but CONCACAF successor Webb – and his assistant Costas Takkas – "picked up where defendant Warner left off". They were among 12 indicted people from whom FIFA is estimating even mere simple losses thus far at $30m.

The latest legal twist in a saga which has dragged FIFA's image and reputation into the gutter has been welcomed enthusiastically by new president Gianni Infantino, following his election in place of the disgraced and banned Sepp Blatter.

Infantino feels the restitution claim is a crucial sign of a sea change at FIFA within which a culture of corruption had been allowed to fester unchecked throughout the 18 years of Blatter's reign.

Under US law any identified victim can claim against the forfeited sums "for losses suffered as a result of a defendant's wrongdoing [and] conspiracies and schemes".

Indicted individuals such as Trinidad's Warner and Paraguayan former CONMEBOL president Nicolas Leoz are contesting extradition applications. Many months, if not years, will pass before even some of the others accused face a court and, if found guilty, are made subject to forfeiture orders.

FIFA's request stated: "An exact value of losses remains to be calculated but...is likely to exceed tens of millions of dollars."

Since last May, senior FIFA executives and spokesmen have insisted that it had no authority or control over CONCACAF and CONMEBOL, that it had been an innocent victim of the criminal behaviour of the confederations' own officials. Critics accuse FIFA of suffering reputational meltdown through the deliberate fault of its past leadership in deliberately turning a blind eye to foul play within its midst.

However, the US Department of Justice considers CONCACAF and CONMEBOL as integrated subsidiaries of FIFA, offering the world federation this particular legal option for action.

No doubt FIFA's lawyers would deny it, but the world federation would surely risk disapproving further attention from the US and Swiss authorities if it failed to take such proactive steps in defence and justification of its priceless victim status.

Sources with direct knowledge of FIFA's legal strategy insist any monies eventually reclaimed would be invested in football development in the Americas. WS

Desperate measures...Jack Warner is fighting extradition to the US over corruption charges

> "The accused, with their sordid misconduct, deeply tarnished the FIFA brand, betrayed their duties and sold their powers to the highest bidder"
>
> FIFA's statement of victim status and request for restitution

Guilty men...Jeffrey Webb and (bottom) Chuck Blazer

FROM THE EDITOR

It's a funny time of the season for a monthly publication. With the exception of France and Greece, where PSG and Olympiakos have already tied up their respective titles, most European leagues remain delicately poised and hard to call. But there can be no denying the extent of the revival of Borussia Dortmund under Thomas Tuchel (page 70); the exciting developments at Sporting in Portugal (page 56); or the emergence as title contenders of Rostov in Russia (page 88). Similarly, Atletico Madrid's French youngster Antoine Griezmann (page 46) looks a genuine global star in the making.

Our deadlines made it difficult to cover the final days of the FIFA election last month, but we can now look back on a victory for UEFA's candidate, Gianni Infantino (page 10). We will reserve judgment as to whether he represents a new broom or more of the same. Until FIFA challenges corruption and mismanagement in places like Nepal (page 34), it will be difficult to deem his tenure in Zurich a success.

> Until FIFA challenges corruption and mismanagement it will be difficult to deem Infantino's tenure a success

Next month, we publish our special guide to the 24 teams taking part in the summer's European Championship.

A lot of hard work awaits over the next few weeks!

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 Infantino wins FIFA election ..... page 10
2 FIFA launches claim against corrupt officials ..... page 15
3 Blatter salary revealed ..... page 16
4 Conte to quit Italy after Euro 2016 ..... page 17
5 Dortmund revived by Thomas Tuchel ..... page 70
6 Boca Juniors hire new coach ..... page 30
7 Higuain continues to lead Golden Shoe rankings ..... page 94
8 Sunday Oliseh leaves Nigeria post ..... page 90
9 Benzema free to be selected by France ..... page 85
10 Rostov emerge as surprise title contenders in Russia ..... page 88

Money man...Sepp Blatter's finances are in the open

SWITZERLAND

Blatter salary revealed as £2.6m

Sepp Blatter was paid £2.6million by FIFA last year after the world governing body revealed for the first time the salary and benefits paid to its former president and secretary-general.

Blatter, 80, whose worldwide ban from football was recently reduced from eight to six years, was paid a total of 3.63m Swiss Francs in 2015. However, previous years' payments were not disclosed and it is believed Blatter received a susbstantial bonus following the 2014 World Cup.

Former secretary-general Jerome Valcke, who in February was banned from football for 12 years, was paid £1.45m in 2015.

It was also announced that the Swiss attorney general has opened criminal proceedings against Valcke.

FIFA accounts for 2015 revealed a loss of $122m (£84m).

Revealed...Jerome Valcke

"He always deployed the same tactics and never took any notice of data analysis. Fortunately, Spaletti is much more open to this sort of thing"

Roma president James Pallotta (right) explains why he felt the need to replace coach Rudi Garcia with Luciano Spaletti early this year

ITALY

Conte to quit *Azzurri* after Euros

Antonio Conte will step down from his position as coach of Italy after this summer's European Championship in France.

The 46-year-old former Juventus boss said he missed the day-to-day action of club football and has been heavily linked with the managerial vacancy at Chelsea.

"I feel that I must go back to being a coach in a club to have the opportunity of coaching every day," explained Conte.

"At this time, all of our concentration is focused on Euro 2016 where we will try with work and sacrifice to take advantage of our potential.

"Those who know me are aware that I will give everything I have."

Future...Antonio Conte wants to return to club football

HEROES & VILLAINS

EDWIN VAN DER SAR

At the age of 45, the former Holland goalkeeper came out of retirement to play for injury-hit Dutch fourth-tier side Noordwijk. He saved a penalty in their 1-1 draw with Jodan Boys.

Back...Edwin Van der Sar

MARCUS RASHFORD

The 18-year-old academy graduate scored twice for Manchester United against Midtjylland after a late call-up for the Europa League tie following a pre-match injury to Anthony Martial. The teenager then scored another brace in United's next match: a 3-2 Premier League win against Arsenal at Old Trafford.

ADRIANO

Scored seven goals in two AFC Champions League games for Seoul. The Brazilian scored a hat-trick in a 4-1 win against Sanfrecce Hiroshima and followed that up with four goals in a 6-0 victory over Buriram United.

WILLY CABALLERO

The Manchester City goalkeeper secured the League Cup for his side by saving three penalties – from Lucas Leiva, Philippe Coutinho and Adam Lallana – in the Final shoot-out against Liverpool.

Winner...Willy Caballero saves a Liverpool penalty

GALATASARAY

The Turkish club were suspended from participation in European competitions for one season should they qualify in either of the next two campaigns after breaching Financial Fairplay regulations.

European ban...Galatasaray

CLEMENS FRITZ & ZLATKO JUNUZOVIC

Werder Bremen captain Fritz and midfielder Junuzovic were fined for intentionally picking up yellow cards against Hanover so that they would be suspended for the "less winnable" Bundesliga match against Bayern Munich.

NORBERT GIESE

The referee of a German regional league match between Neustrelitz and Oberlausitz Neugersdorf was involved in a head-to head confrontation with Neustrelitz player Fabio Viteritti, who he then pushed to the floor.

CARLOS VELA

After calling in sick for training, the Real Sociedad striker was caught out when it was revealed that he had been in Madrid at a Chris Brown concert the night before.

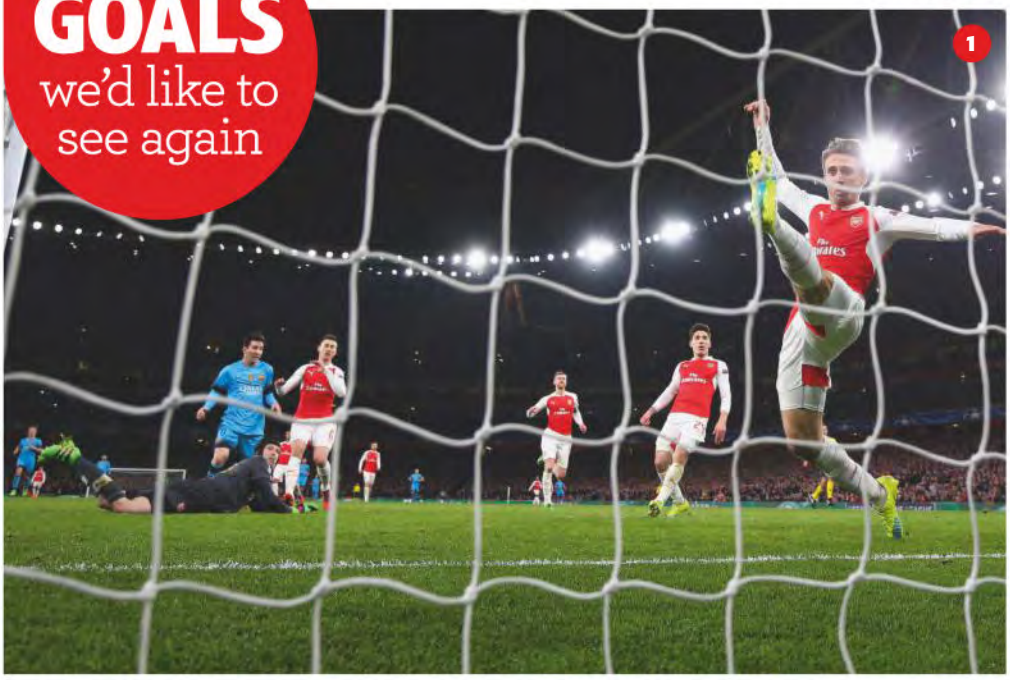
Dodged training...Carlos Vela

"I am so pleased, as my heart is half Russian. I have been in Russia for a long time and I love this country"

Lokomotiv Moscow's Brazil-born goalkeeper Guilherme after his first call-up to the Russian national squad

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://po.st/zIK0Jy



1 LIONEL MESSI
Barcelona v Arsenal
Counter-attacking football at its breathtaking best with Barca's front three of Neymar, Luis Suarez and Messi all combining at pace, before the Argentinian's sublime first touch gives him time to finish past Petr Cech.

2 JONATHAN OPOKU
VVV v NAC Breda
Shows fantastic close skills to chip two defenders and the goalkeeper in this Dutch second-tier game.

3 ROMELU LUKAKU
Everton v Chelsea
An amazing solo goal, reminiscent of Ricky Villa's for Tottenham Hotspur in the 1981 Final, helps beat Chelsea in the FA Cup.

4 GIANFRANCO LABARTHE
Real Garcilaso v Universitario
Two one-two's with Paulo Albarracin before finishing from the centre of the penalty area.

5 ALEJANDRO ROMERO
Huracan v Penarol
Scores with a well struck half-volley for the only goal of the game in this Libertadores Cup tie.

6 FERNANDINHO
Chongqing Lifan v Guangzhou Evergrande
Runs with the ball from midway inside his own half before a step-over and a left-foot shot.

WINNERS

BARCELONA
Their 5-1 victory against Rayo Vallecano set a new Spanish record of 35 games unbeaten in all competitions.

OLYMPIAKOS
The defending champions wrapped up the Greek championship with six games to spare, securing their 43rd league title overall in the process.

PSG
Claimed the French league title in style with a 9-0 win away to Troyes to secure the championship with eight games to spare.

LOSERS

CHELSEA
The reigning English champions season came to an end as they were knocked out of the Champions League and FA Cup in the space of four days.

DIDIER DESCHAMPS
The France boss was watching Napoli's Kalidou Koulibaly – until he found out he is Senegalese.

CHRIS BRUNT
The 31-year-old, who played eight times in Northern Ireland's qualifying campaign, will miss this summer's Euro finals through injury.

"If one of my club presidents had said that about me, I would have gone to his house to have it out with him"

Ex-Italy striker Christian Vieri (right) takes aim at Napoli owner Aurelio De Laurentiis for claiming his side's top marksman, Gonzalo Higuain, was overweight

Headliner

Ronnie McFall

End of an era for long-serving Portadown boss

In the dog-eat-dog world of modern football, a manager handing in his resignation after a home defeat in the cup to second-tier opponents is nothing unusual.

However, Ronnie McFall's decision to quit Portadown after Lurgan Celtic's injury-time winner in the Irish Cup quarter-finals brought an end to his remarkable record of 29 years and 76 days in charge of the same club.

McFall's predecessor in the longevity stakes had been Alex Ferguson, whose 26 years in charge of Manchester United he had passed in May 2013.

As a player, McFall was a no-nonsense defender who had joined local club Portadown at the age of 16 before moving to Dundee United. He returned from Scotland to play for Ards and Portadown again before joining Glentoran in 1975, where he won the league title two years later. He was appointed player-manager of Glens in January 1979 and won the league in 1981 and Irish Cup in 1983 before being sacked in December 1984.

On December 21, 1986, McFall was appointed manager of Portadown, six weeks after Ferguson moved to Old Trafford, and used to joke: "When I came to Portadown, people said that a gypsy had placed a curse on the club, that they would never win a major trophy."

Indeed, Portadown, founded in 1889 and league members since 1924, did not win their first championship until 1990, when they finished the season unbeaten, and then did the domestic double the following term.

In total there have been four Irish league titles, three Irish Cup wins and the Irish League Cup in 2009 – the year Portadown also won the Championship trophy in McFall's only season in the second tier as their boss after an administrative error led to the club failing to apply for Premiership membership.

Although the trophy cupboard has been gathering dust in recent years, and McFall had always intended to stand down at the end of the current campaign, the end came swiftly and cruelly. Pacing the touchline in his trademark flat cap and muffler before delivering his infamous half-time and full-time dressing-downs of underperforming players, the 70-year-old will be greatly missed.

Photo: Inpho

"When I came to Portadown, people said a gypsy had placed a curse on the club, they would never win a major trophy"

The regard in which he is held can be seen in the five times he was named Northern Ireland's Manager of the Year and his MBE in 2008.

His wife, Anne, herself a former hockey player, was a familiar figure at Portadown matches, home and away, and McFall says he owes her everything. "Anne has always been there for me throughout my whole career, playing, managing, whatever," he declares. "Without her support I know I would never have had the success I've enjoyed."

He now hands the baton of longest-serving manager to Arsene Wenger, in charge of Arsenal since September 1996.

Roy Kitson

"While it's a difficult one, the Olympic Games are a priority for me. It's the one title we've never one and we're playing at home"

Brazil coach Dunga (left) hints at calling up Neymar for Rio

Headliner

Francesco Totti

End of the line for Roma's golden boy?

When Roma's American president James Pallotta landed in Rome recently, there was no doubt that top priority on his busy schedule would concern the club's ageing icon, Francesco Totti.

In essence, what are we going to do with him? Totti will be 40 in September and injury has ruled him out for practically the entire season so far. He has played in just five Serie A games, while a three-minute run-out in the dying moments of a 2-0 loss to Real Madrid was his only Champions League appearance.

Has the time come to call it a day? There are certainly those who think so. Ex-Milan star Zvonimir Boban says: "Totti has to understand he can no longer play serious football. He plays at about two kilometres per hour. He deserves all the sympathy and support of the Roman piazza and, indeed, of all Italian football fans, but you cannot hide from reality. If you're not up to it any more, enough is enough."

> "I would have liked a bit more respect from the club"
>
> Totti on his fleeting appearance against Real Madrid

The problem, however, is that Totti does not seem to agree. Three days after the Real Madrid game, he complained to Italian state TV that "he would have liked a bit more respect from the club" – basic playerspeak for "I would like to play".

Totti wants a final bite of the cherry, to the end of the 2016-2017 season. But for once his timing was off for, as he was speaking poolside at Trigoria training centre, coach Luciano Spalletti was holding his routine pre-match press conference inside.

Spalletti took the media by surprise, announcing that Totti would be in the starting line-up for the following night's game against Palermo. But after watching the Totti interview later that night, he was not best pleased. Next morning he told Totti he would play no part against Palermo.

For Totti and many of his fans, the shock was devastating. After all, he is that rare bird in the modern game: a player whose 25-year-long first-class career has been played at only one club, which he first joined at the age of 12.

A 2006 World Cup winner, a 2001 Serie A champion, the second-highest Serie A goalscorer of all time, third on its all-time appearance list, Totti is a walking national monument. On top of that – via his charity work, TV ads, regular clever soundbites – he has through the years shown himself to be an intelligent player and with an exemplary off-the-field record.

There have, of course, been "moments". The spitting incident with Denmark's Christian Poulsen at Euro 2004 and his kicking of Mario Balottelli's shins in the 2012 Italian Cup Final mean not even his dearest fans have dared suggest he was perfect.

But what they do suggest is that he is very special. His longevity, his loyalty to Roma, the sense to which he seems the very incarnation of an irreverent flamboyance typical of the capital and his obvious bonhomie have made him special.

When French coach Rudi Garcia – who was sacked in November – arrived at Roma three years ago, he was astonished to find that at Trigoria there was a special office for a guy called Vito Scala, a personal trainer and physio for Totti who was also a fully paid-up club employee.

Scala's office was like a museum to Totti, decorated with photos, posters, team shirts and shirts of other famous players against whom Totti had played. Garcia mused on the peculiarity of a club which pays one guy to look after just one player, concluding Totti was untouchable. "Far be it from me to think of dropping him," he said.

Unfortunately for Totti, the time has now come when the club has to think of just that. And at a time when Roma and Spalletti are staging a mini-revival. They beat Palermo 5-0 without him.

Despite rumours Totti's wish will be granted and Roma will shortly extend his contract to 2017, how he will be used next term remains to be seen. Sparingly, almost certainly, and probably on a reduced salary.

One thing seems for sure: Roma and Totti need one another. Totti's whole being is as a Roma footballer, while the club will never have a better, more "shirt-selling" international ambassador.

Paddy Agnew

On his knees...but Totti and Roma still need each other

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Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Goalkeepers playing to a different set of rules

Collision...Aston Villa keeper Brad Guzan crashes into Leicester City's Nathan Dyer

Let me make yet another attempt to bring IFAB up to date. It has failed to notice that, during the 1982 World Cup, there was a horrendous incident involving German goalkeeper Harald Schumacher who smashed into Patrick Battiston of France, knocking him unconscious and sending him to hospital with a variety of serious injuries.

It was, by general agreement, one of the most brutal fouls ever. Yet the referee did not give it. And I am quite certain that the IFAB guys were not paying attention. Had they been, they would surely have felt obliged to react, to instigate a rule change that identified such violence and made sure that it would be harshly punished.

Nothing was done. Here we are, 34 years later, and still no action has been taken. Quite the opposite. IFAB has just amended the ridiculously termed "triple punishment" situation to make it almost certain that goalkeepers fouling attacking payers will not be ejected.

Something else that IFAB has failed to notice: the tremendous amount of detailed research that has been done during the last decade on the perils of concussion injuries.

> Guzan should have been ejected but the referee took no action

Four of the eight IFAB votes come from Brits: representatives of the English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish associations. Even allowing for the traditional insularity of that group, surely they should have been aware of what happened last September in their own backyard, in a Premier League game at Leicester City?

Aston Villa's American goalkeeper Brad Guzan came charging out of his goal, knee raised in typical goalkeeper fashion, intending to punch the ball away. He arrived too late. Leicester's Nathan Dyer got to the ball first. All Guzan accomplished by his leap was to smash into Dyer and knock him senseless. The proof that Dyer got there first was that the ball ended up in the net.

Dyer was resuscitated on the field, while Guzan escaped uninjured...and unpunished. Yet "jumping at an opponent" is a foul, "reckless" play calls for a caution, and using excessive force – "in danger of injuring an opponent" – is a red card offence.

Guzan was clearly guilty of all three fouls and should have been ejected. But the referee took no action, presumably because it has somehow become acceptable for goalkeepers to make these dangerous challenges.

Any outfield player, jumping high into an opponent so that his knees make contact with the opponent's head, would be summarily ejected for such an action.

But goalkeepers are allowed to get away with it, as though they are playing to a different set of rules. They can knock opponents out cold, they can cause concussions, and the referees do nothing.

There is an obvious problem here for the entire sport of football. A legal one. The dangers of concussions, both short term and long term, are now being revealed. Football cannot pretend it is not aware.

Yet it is doing nothing to clamp down on goalkeeper mayhem.

This must be – should be – IFAB's responsibility. To be aware of trends in the sport and to take action – meaning to change the rules – whenever it finds something unacceptable.

Of course that doesn't sound like the IFAB we know. IFAB never takes preventive action. It waits, and waits, and waits again, seemingly for the worst to happen, before it acts. Which is why it is at least a decade behind other sports in its – still exploratory – use of video replays.

On this goalkeeper matter, football and IFAB really cannot afford to wait.

While goalkeepers are taught that when they come out for the ball they must get it, regardless of who, friend or foe, is in the way; while referees ignore the glaring fouls this causes; and while IFAB hides behind its customary inertia, the lawyers are watching. They will cite the inadequacy of football's absurdly named "Laws" – and they will then turn to the real Law under which damages can be claimed from employers and authorities who fail to safeguard against a known risk. WS

"For now, I will not be at PSG next season. But if they replace the Eiffel Tower with a statue of me, then I will stay"

Zlatan Ibrahimovic jokes about his future in Paris

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Appointments, sackings and loans

IN

Egyptian calling... Martin Jol

EUROPE

RAFA BENITEZ was appointed manager of Newcastle United after they sacked Steve McClaren with 10 Premier League games to go.

Former Arsenal and Ivory Coast full-back **EMMANUEL EBOUE**, who had been without a club since his release by Galatasaray last summer, joined Sunderland.

WALTER NOVELLINO became Palermo's seventh coach of their Serie A campaign, replacing Beppe Iachini, who lasted just three weeks.

Ligue 1 strugglers Toulouse named **PASCAL DUPRAZ** as Dominique Arribage's replacement after a 2-1 loss to Rennes.

JOSE GONZALEZ was appointed coach of La Liga side Granada after Jose Ramon Sandoval was sacked.

Rescue mission...Rafa Benitez

Former Slovakia boss **VLADIMIR WEISS** replaced Kakhaber Tskhadadze in charge of Georgia.

Former Denmark striker **JON DAHL TOMASSON** will take up a role as assistant to national coach Age Hareide in June.

DAVID JEFFREY, who spent 17 years as Linfield manager and won 31 trophies with the Belfast club before stepping down, replaced Glenn Ferguson at Ballymena United.

AFRICA

Former Tottenham Hotspur, Hamburg, Ajax and Fulham coach **MARTIN JOL** was appointed coach of Egyptian side Al Ahly, while ex Scotland and Aston Villa boss **ALEX MCLEISH** took charge of Zamalek.

STANLEY OKUMBI replaced Bobby Williamson as coach of Kenya's national side.

Cape Verde's interim coach **FELISBERTO CARDOSO**, who is known as "Beto", was handed the job on a permanent basis.

Tunisian coach **NIZAR KHANFIR** took charge of Rwandan champions APR on a six-month deal.

Veh's successor...Niko Kovac takes over at Eintracht

Kovac back in the game

NIKO KOVAC, who was in charge of Croatia's national team until last year, was appointed coach of Eintracht Frankfurt, who sacked Armin Veh when a run of seven games without a win left the club third bottom of the Bundesliga.

OUT

Gone...Steffan Effenberg

EUROPE

FERNANDO MORIENTES, who won the Champions League three times with Real Madrid, was sacked by Spanish third-tier side Fuenlabrada in his first job as head coach.

Udinese dismissed coach **STEFANO COLANTUONO** after a run of one win in 11 Serie A games.

PAOK sacked Croatian coach **IGOR TUDOR** after he publicly criticised the Greek side following a 2-1 defeat at Panthrakikos.

Brondby coach **THOMAS FRANK** resigned after being criticised by the Danish club's chairman on an online fan forum.

STEFFAN EFFENBERG was sacked by Bundesliga 2 side Paderborn after only five months in charge.

SOUTH AMERICA

MARCELO OLIVEIRA was dismissed by Palmeiras after the Brazilian side lost to Nacional of Uruguay in the Libertadores Cup.

AFRICA

SUNDAY OLISEH resigned as coach of Nigeria after accusing the Nigerian FA of contract violations and failing to pay his wages.

Denizli quits Galatasaray

Short spell...Gala's Mustafa Denizli lasted three months

Galatasaray coach **MUSTAFA DENIZLI** quit the Turkish club after just three months in charge.

The former national coach replaced Hamza Hamzaoglu in November but was unable to repeat the sort of form that won them the title last season. At the beginning of March, Galatasaray were in fifth place and 16 points adrift of leaders Fenerbahce.

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Loud and clear...Arsenal supporters get their message across

Wenger should be history by now

Once more, after an embarrassing FA Cup defeat by Watford, the cries went up for Arsene Wenger's departure. There were even reportedly scuffles outside the stadium after the game.

My own feeling has been that Wenger should ideally have gone a couple of seasons ago, after a dismal campaign in which the Gunners were heavily defeated by Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool. A disaster which, I wrote at the time, would have had any Serie A manager ejected double quick.

In Wenger's defence, it has to be said the huge cost of the Emirates Stadium seriously limited his freedom in the transfer market, causing the loss of stars such as Robin Van Persie and preventing expensive replacements. Nor can one deny the magnitude of his earlier achievements. Herbert Chapman was beyond doubt the most innovative and essential manager of Arsenal, but he reigned only between 1925 and his sadly premature death in 1934. Wenger was appointed back in 1996, transforming the team and building a splendid new training ground at London Colney.

In recent years the Gunners have had to content themselves with their consecutive victories in the FA Cup. They never – though once came close to it – won a European Champions Final and even their celebrated unbeaten season, in a streak prolonged to 49 games until a contentious defeat at Old Trafford, might have ended very early in its triumphant season. Portsmouth were a goal up at Highbury and looking en route to victory until Robert Pires tumbled unconvincingly in the penalty area. The Gunners saved the game and their run from the spot.

It's arguable the defence has never been the same since Tony Adams retired but, in fairness to Wenger, the absence all season of the admirably inventive Jack Wilshere has been a notable burden.

I still believe club and manager suffered when David Dein, the club vice-chairman who brought Wenger to Arsenal, was forced out. Without him, there has been nobody in authority to direct and guide Wenger. Certainly not the American plutocrat and chief shareholder Stan Kroenke, so rarely seen in London though he takes a whopping £3million out of the club for "advice" each year.

No guidance... Arsene Wenger

Leicester, a wonderful tale of the mediocre

Back in the remote 1940s, when Franklin D Roosevelt died and Harry Truman, his deputy, succeeded him as president of the United States. The cynics said it confirmed the old saying, made in good faith, that anybody could become president. In the event, Truman became a very successful one. Just, you almost might say, as Leicester move splendidly on towards winning the Premier League – exempt in their case from any suggestion that it can be called, as I have often done, the "Greed is Good League".

By the same token, if I say that Leicester are on course by default, I mean no disrespect to this extraordinary team, whose very emblem is surely the remarkable Jamie Vardy. Spurned by his local club Sheffield Wednesday, marooned for years in non-league football, he has emerged in his late 20s as a goalscorer of pace, initiative and renown. I am indeed among those tens of thousands outside of Leicester who long to see the team take the title. But what does it tell us about the rest of the Premier League and its supposed giants?

Chelsea have plummeted in the image of the defenestrated Jose Mourinho. Arsenal under Arsene Wenger have flagged in the latter stages. Manchester United under Louis Van Gaal have been largely a disaster. Manchester City for all the vast sums spent have failed to last the pace.

Leicester's hard-earned 1-0 win over a Newcastle United team pitifully inept under Steve McClaren, now under the highly experienced and regarded Rafa Benitez, who so surprisingly accepted the job, was hardly that of a majestic team. Yet a team which has not only given us the dynamic Vardy but has impressingly revived the fortunes of Marc Albrighton and Danny Drinkwater, which has nurtured the remarkable talents of Riyad Mahrez, deserves acclaim, where several far more fashionable clubs deserve ignominy.

Triumphant...Leicester City players rush to congratulate Shinji Okazaki after his winning goal against Newcastle United

President by default... Gianni Infantino

Infantino, the least worst option

At FIFA, in the old Sicilian saying, one hand continues to wash the other, and very dirty hands they have been. Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini have gone not a moment too soon, and to reduce their suspensions from eight to six years makes no sense. This, FIFA says, it has done "in recognition of their services to football".

Blatter's regime has been blighted by endemic corruption and it's enough to examine his grovelling correspondence with Jack Warner to condemn his wretched rule.

You could make a case, I suppose, for Platini for all he achieved in a glittering playing career. But what did he achieve at UEFA, quite apart from his dodgy deal with Blatter with its nine-year lapse of payment? At UEFA he initiated the Europa League, which is bloated and superfluous. He has absurdly increased the number of finalists in the European Championship and brought in so-called financial fairplay limits which were anything but fair to less powerful clubs and have now been diluted.

Now Platini's former UEFA sidekick and admirer Gianni Infantino, new incumbent of the FIFA presidency – by default, you might say – thanks his old boss for everything he has taught him (a sobering thought). "I have strong, deep thoughts for Platini right now." Oh dear.

The curious case of Dr Eva Carneiro

Dr Eva Carneiro's case against Jose Mourinho and Chelsea drags on. The latest hearing brought no ultimate solution, though it is surely plain enough that the much put-upon Gibraltarian must win. Reportedly she refused the offer on behalf of Mourinho and Chelsea. This was indeed a horrid affair, a case of constructive dismissal at its most seemingly obvious.

What surprises me is that in the brief reports of the latest tribunal, essential facts go unreported. Notably, that the doctor had no alternative but to go on the field to treat Eden Hazard, who had collapsed after a challenge, because the referee had called her on. That the incident happened at the very end of the game when Chelsea, already down to 10 men, were desperately seeking a goal, was neither here nor there. Rules are emphatically rules.

Dispute...Eva Carneiro

There is also, for me, the unresolved question of what Mourinho shouted. The FA inquiry let him, you might think, off when the interpreter they consulted said it was Spanish *"hijo di puta"* (son of a whore), rather than *"hija di puta"*, meaning daughter of a whore, which other Spanish speakers who had heard the insult insisted that it was.

Certainly, *hija* would have made more sense in its rough way than *hijo*, for who would the son of a whore have been?

Mourinho's contention that the doctor had been naive and impulsive is in direct contradiction of the facts and he should have been man enough to have, calming down, admitted as much.

That the club appears to be supporting him is still more baffling. As things stand it seems impossible for Dr Carneiro to lose her case, and sums of £100,000 in compensation have been mentioned. A mere flea bite for Mourinho and Chelsea but a sum well deserved by Dr Carneiro, totally innocent in the whole dismal affair.

● Read Brian Glanville's exclusive online column at worldsoccer.com

eye witness

Steve Menary reports

GIBRALTAR

Rock of plenty

UEFA membership has brought financial gains but tensions between the clubs have increased

At the final whistle, the identical Spanish twins who coach Europa surge out of the technical area at the Victoria Stadium to celebrate a 2-0 victory with their team. The crowd roars, mostly in Spanish, as Dimas and David Carrasco, who wear matching clothes, celebrate.

Since being revived, Europa had not beaten opponents Lincoln Red Imps, who have won the last 13 Gibraltarian championships.

But for many Gibraltarians, Europa represent all that has gone wrong since the British overseas territory was admitted to UEFA after a long-running membership battle in May 2013.

Since then, the tiny enclave with a population of just 30,000 has, at the top end at least, become awash with cash.

"Before UEFA, no one was paid," says Europa president Peter Cabezutto. "They got boots or meals, freebies, but not paid like now, where they are semi-professional."

Europa have 20 teams at different age groups with mostly Gibraltarian players, but since Cabezutto got involved three years ago the first team has been transformed. And the catalyst was UEFA membership.

He says: "We have a couple of Gibraltarians in our first-team squad. Next season, we want two or three playing in the first team.

"Before we didn't have the prospect of taking a team to Europe. We started with a team of Gibraltarian players and three from overseas, but Lincoln have all the best players. To compete with Lincoln we have to get players from abroad."

For Europa and Lincoln, playing in UEFA club competitions has a massive impact.

Lincoln got €350,000 for playing in the first round of the 2014-15 Champions League, when they were eliminated 6-3 on aggregate by Faroese side HB. The same season, Europa took part in the Europa League qualifiers as runners-up, were also knocked out and got €120,000.

Small sums, but football in Gibraltar is not like anywhere else in Europe. The clubs all share the same ground and have no discernible income bar UEFA money.

This season, Lincoln went one better, beating Andorran champions Santa Coloma, before going down 3-0 an aggregate to Danish champions Midtjylland in the next round. For that brief sojourn they earned another €550,000.

UEFA does distribute money to other Gibraltarian clubs as part of its solidarity payments scheme, but payments of around €20,000 per club are paltry compared with the riches enjoyed by Lincoln.

Out of a squad of 32 players, Lincoln have eight full-time players and, despite the Europa defeat, are likely to win the championship again this term. More money will follow.

With Gibraltar's UEFA coefficient rising due to Lincoln's European success, there is the prospect of another Europa League place in 2017-18, but such is the impact of this money that it could simply extend the hegemony from two clubs to three.

The Gibraltar Football Association (GFA) wants to take action. Chief executive

Team bonding...Europa huddle after beating great rivals Lincoln Red Imps

Shadow of the Rock... all league games are played on the same pitch, next to the country's iconic landmark

> "We were champions for many years when there was no money. Are we going to step back and give away all our prize money now?"
>
> **Derek Alman, president of Lincoln Red Imps**

Dennis Beiso says: "Lincoln's sporting success deserves to be rewarded. Clubs cannot be expected to just give money away, but we can't have one, two or three clubs running away with a huge slice of the financial pie each year."

The prospect of revenue sharing has been mooted linked to a wider package of reforms including youth development, but Lincoln are not keen.

"We were champions for many years when there was no money. What are we going to do? Throw it all away and take a step back and give away our prize money?" says president Derek Alman.

"It's easy to say the league's not

Eerie atmosphere...a handful of fans watch Europa play Lincoln

competitive but what makes a league competitive? You need security and loyalty for your players."

Lincoln's club policy is that seven Gibraltarians must start every game and at least six must be on the field at the end. Of that 32-man squad, 25 are Gibraltarian including most of the national team.

The likes of striker Lee Casciaro, a border guard who rejected a professional contract with Dagenham & Redbridge citing lack of job security, and Roy Chipolina have been with Lincoln since they were children. When Liam Walker returned home from playing professionally in Israel, there was only one club he was likely to join.

With UEFA money such a tantalising prize, clubs such as Lions are eschewing the old sporting club model on which Lincoln still operates and turning into limited companies backed by investors, who can speculate for success.

"Other clubs have investors and they want to share our prize money, but we can't share their investment money," says Alman. "I don't know how much money they have, but if you want to share our money you have to share our risks."

> "Gibraltar has a strong economy and in Spain some players don't get paid. They don't have that problem here"
>
> **Europa president Peter Cabezutto**

Alman cites the costs of playing in Europe. Lincoln sold out their three home European games, but these must be all-seater. Gibraltar's only ground, the Victoria Stadium, seats just 2,200. With tickets from £5 in the uncovered East Stand to £15 in the main stand, the club does not make a big profit and travelling to Torshavn cost the club €100,000.

UEFA's money, which makes all this possible, came at a time when the wider Spanish economy is suffering. Suddenly, football in Gibraltar is a realistic option for career progression.

GFA media officer Stephen Gonzalez points to the amount of foreign players with profiles on the Football Manager computer game. These are not players who have drifted across the border looking for a game.

Cabezutto says: "Gibraltar has a strong economy and in Spain some players don't get paid. They don't have that problem here and it's also a way of being seen by other clubs in Europe."

Locally, rumours abound of top Gibraltarian players – who all have full-time jobs – earning £1,000 a month. Alman will not be drawn on wages, but says the seven overseas players at Lincoln, from Argentina and Spain, are all full-time.

So is Walker, who says: "It's well away from being a pro league, but you can't change it all from one day to another. It has to be gradual."

What change there has been is still massive from five years ago, when clubs played in isolation and the national team's only regular football was the biennial Island Games against the likes of the Isle of Wight. Since joining UEFA, Gibraltar have beaten Malta and the Faroe Islands, and drawn with Estonia and Slovakia. However, a 4-0 defeat in Germany is celebrated most.

"It's got better as the games went on and Germany was a turning point," says Scott Wiseman, who plays in England for Scunthorpe United and is eligible as his mother was born on the Rock.

Allen Bula was coach for the Germany game but the combustible Gibraltarian parted company with the GFA after six years in 2015 due to injudicious remarks to the media. His replacement is the affable Jeff Wood, a former professional with Charlton Athletic, who took over at a difficult time.

With Gibraltar unable to host matches at home due to the Victoria Stadium's artificial pitch, games had to be played 400km away in Portugal. Around 5,000 Gibraltarians travelled to the 5-0 defeat by Germany according to the GFA, but after 10 defeats, the only reward was a goal from Casciaro in a 6-1 loss to Scotland

Big match...Liam Walker is surrounded by a posse of Germans during the Euro 2016 qualifier in Nuremberg

Home and away... Gibraltar and the Republic of Ireland take to the field for a Euro qualifier in Faro, Portugal

and one from Jake Gosling in an 8-1 pasting from Poland.

Gosling, who is with Bristol Rovers but recently joined Newport County on loan, is eligible as his father was born in Gibraltar.

He says: "I saw they had joined UEFA on the web, spoke to my agent and it went from there. To score against Poland was one of the highlights of my career. I could have scored against Germany. They are things I'll never forget."

Although the veteran David Artell and Macclesfield's Rees Styche have featured, Wood relies mostly on locals, but after hosting Liechtenstein and Latvia at the end of March, Gibraltar have no more games.

Joining UEFA took 16 years of lobbying. Since joining, Beiso describes UEFA as fantastically helpful and the European body has pledged to fund a 5,000-seat stadium at a former barracks at Lathbury.

FIFA membership – and a place in the World Cup draw – is now their aim. Beiso hopes that with UEFA's general secretary Gianni Infantino now FIFA president, their application will be looked upon favourably. World Cup 2018 qualifying groups H and I feature only five teams, so including Gibraltar and Kosovo, who are also pressing for recognition, would not be difficult, although Beiso has no guarantees.

Rejection would have major consequences at all levels, aside from lack of internationals. At present, Gibraltarian clubs are not part of FIFA's transfer matching system, which leaves clubs in a vulnerable position.

With Infantino also proposing to up FIFA's annual financial assistance payment to $1.25 million a year, acceptance would bring more cash but at least how to spend it would be down to the GFA. WS

Faithful few...fans cheer on their team against Germany in Portugal

Football in Gibraltar

THE KEY FIGURES

Dennis Beiso The articulate former public sector worker was the GFA's unpaid UEFA liaison officer prior to the country's recognition by the European body and has since taken over as full-time chief executive officer.

Roy Chipolina A customs officer and stalwart of the national team, of which he is captain. However, if they are not admitted into FIFA and the 33-year-old does not get a chance to play in the World Cup qualifiers, international retirement may beckon.

Jeff Wood The goalkeeper's playing career took him from London to Finland, Hong Kong and Malta, before a move into management, first at home then overseas. He first worked on the Rock in 2004 and replaced Allen Bula as national coach.

Derek Alman President and founder member of perennial champions Lincoln Red Imps, he has employed a full-time foreign coach and some overseas players but retains the core of the national team. Remains a strong opponent of sharing UEFA prize money.

Peter Cabezutto President of Europa, only realistic rival to Lincoln's dominance. After Gibraltar were accepted into UEFA, Cabezutto took control as part of a consortium that included his brother Patrick and Englishman Guy Langton. Europa have five basketball teams and bold plans in athletics, cricket and rugby.

GIBRALTAR FIRST DIVISION

Angels A new club formed in the flush of UEFA membership in 2014, they won promotion at the first attempt and are struggling in their inaugural top-flight season.

Britannia XI The original club dated back to 1907 but folded before being revived in 2009.

Europa Originally College Europa, they date back more than 90 years. Europa League qualifiers in the last two seasons and a big youth set-up but have alienated some as the first XI is all Spanish.

Gibraltar United Another old club, founded in 1943, they reformed in 2014 and under president Paul Collado have a policy of fielding local players.

Glacis United Formed by players from the Glacis residential estate in the north of Gibraltar in 1965 and still with offices there. Unlike many Gibraltarian clubs, Glacis are still owned by its members.

Lincoln Red Imps Champions 12 times in a row and 21 times in the last 30 years, the club emerged from former Police side, the Blue Batons. Under the guidance of Raul Procopio they remain the team to beat.

Lions Gibraltar Formed in 1966 to celebrate England's World Cup triumph, the club have a strong youth set-up on the Rock and still have three Lions on their logo.

Lynx The only side with a Gibraltarian coach, but then boss Albert Parodo also founded the club in 2007. Former national boss Allen Bula is sporting director.

Manchester 62 Originally known as Manchester United, the club changed its name after Gibraltar was accepted by UEFA to reflect the year of its foundation. Have a strong youth set-up.

St Josephs Named after a residential estate in the south of the territory, where the club is still based.

eyewitness

Joel Richards reports from Buenos Aires

ARGENTINA

Boca ring the changes

Barros Schelotto back at the Bombonera after the champions sack coach Arruabarrena

In 1960, the late Boca Juniors president Alberto Armando, after whom the world-famous Bombonera stadium is officially named, told Brazilian striker Paulo Valentim upon arrival at the club to "forget about the others, just score against River". Valentim took note – and no other Boca player has scored more goals against River Plate in the club's history.

This maxim of the need to perform best against the club's greatest rivals remains true to this day – and this goes as much for the coach as the playing staff. At both Boca and River, seasons are evaluated in absolute terms of success but also in terms of how they fare compared with the club from the other end of the city.

Just five games into the new season as coach of the defending league champions, Rodolfo Arruabarrena left Boca and was replaced by another former Bombonera favourite, Guillermo Barros Schelotto, whose twin, Gustavo, also joined him.

The achievement of last year's domestic double was considerable, despite the controversy over refereeing decisions in the Argentinian Cup Final against Rosario Central. Yet bearing larger on the club's psyche was losing twice to River Plate in continental competition: first in the Sudamericana and then in the Libertadores Cup.

The sight of *Los Millonarios* going on to win both competitions only rubbed salt into an open wound – which included stadium bans after poor behaviour by Boca supporters that called off the *superclasico* but also displays in which Boca rarely tested River.

> "We know we are starting from scratch even though Boca are champions. They don't have an edge any more"
>
> **New coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto**

The summer pre-season friendlies brought more defeats by River – bruising the club's morale – as well as petulant red cards, irresponsible gestures from senior players and needlessly conceded penalties, questioning the team's discipline.

In the Super Cup, San Lorenzo handed Boca a 4-0 drubbing. Insipid early season performances crowned by a 1-0 defeat to Racing delivered the inevitable end to Arruabarrena's contract and Guillermo Barros Schelotto's appointment.

Just a few weeks previously Barros Schelotto was embarking on a career in Europe with Palermo, while Boca were talking of continental silverware this year. Yet it was always just a question of time as

Blowing a storm... Boca fans want the club to reassert their authority over bitter rivals River Plate

Brothers in arms... Guillermo Barros Schelotto (right) will be assisted by his twin, Gustavo

to when Barros Schelotto would be named Boca coach. Even before he demonstrated ample credentials as a coach at Lanus, he was the perennial candidate for the job at the Bombonera.

As a player with Boca he won 16 trophies – including four Libertadores and two Intercontinental Cups – during the golden era of the late 1990s and 2000s. He was one of the last of a breed of out-and-out wingers who assured quality service to the strikers. Just as importantly, in the eyes of supporters, he also boasted a particularly acute talent for winding up opponents, especially those in the colours of arch-rivals River.

Without a UEFA licence, the sojourn at Palermo was brief and will only be a footnote in his career. A strong record from his time at Lanus, where he won the 2013 Sudamericana Cup, placed him in the running for the job at top clubs.

He preferred to play an attacking three when in charge at Lanus, but beyond the intricacies of defensive and attacking systems, the new Boca coach will be required to improve performance levels from what is arguably the most talented – and is certainly among the most handsomely remunerated – group of

No mercy...Boca and River clash in the *superclasico*

players in the country.

Boca have quality players for the level of competition in Argentina, so much so that the cover of magazine *El Grafico* lined up Carlos Tevez, Daniel Osvaldo, Fernando Gago, Augusto Orion and Daniel Diaz in February and reasonably ran with the headline that Boca were "The Candidate".

> The sight of River Plate winning both Sudamericana and Libertadores Cups rubbed salt into an open wound

But Tevez's form has dipped alarmingly, as has that of other senior players who are not nursing injuries. Other important players, such as midfielder Pablo Perez, end what seems like every game, if not every other, conditioned by a needlessly earned yellow card.

Pressure...Barros Schelotto and Carlos Tevez

Barros Schelotto picks up where Arruabarrena, his former team-mate, and Carlos Bianchi, his former coach, left the club – searching for a type of consistency not seen since the 37-match unbeaten run built by Julio Falcioni in 2012. Two former greats came and went, now it is Barros Schelotto's turn.

He must find the solutions without the benefit of a pre-season or an open transfer window, but there is good news. This is another short season in Argentina, so soon he will be able to shape the squad and start afresh for next term.

The organisational eccentricities that Argentinian clubs voted in for this season mean the 30-team tournament is split into two divisions, Zone 1 and Zone 2, with just 16 matchdays. The winners of the two zones will face each other in the Final to be crowned champion.

It is, officially, a "transitional tournament" – as was the 2014 league season – as Argentinian football aims to transition all the way from the 30-team league decided upon before the ex-AFA president Julio Grondona died, to a format that mirrors the European leagues. WS

Back Home

River return... Andres D'Alessandro

Just as Boca have looked to a former great to take over as coach, so many of the "Big Five" clubs have welcomed back several old players.

After many years of rumours and often appearing as a pawn in club politics, **Andres D'Alessandro** returned to River Plate, much to the disgust of the Internacional supporters who adored their captain. Most notably, he is joined by the fellow veteran Ivan Alonso from Uruguay's Nacional.

In Avellaneda, just outside Buenos Aires, while Independiente wait for Sergio Aguero to return – he has hinted it will be after the 2018 World Cup – for now they have experienced striker **German Denis** back from Europe. Neighbours Racing welcomed back **Lisandro Lopez**, who has already scored a stunning 89th-minute overhead kick ("the best goal of my career") in the derby against Independiente, as well as **Rodrigo De Paul** on loan from Valencia for new coach Facundo Sava. **Fernando Belluschi** also returned to his home country, but not to former club Newell's or River Plate but to San Lorenzo, where he was instrumental in the Super Cup victory over Boca.

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eyewitness

Christian Radnedge reports

NEPAL

Land of the puppet president

Corruption has caused more damage to Nepalese football than last year's earthquakes

Almost a year since one of the region's most devastating earthquakes, piles of rubble still litter many of the streets of Kathmandu. The fragile buildings in Nepal's capital were no match for the quake that struck in April 2015, killing more than 8,000 and injuring another 21,000.

However, the people are of such strong character in these parts that any visitor would struggle to gauge the difficulty of the rebuilding effort through the smiles on the locals' faces. The fear returns to the fore, though, whenever an aftershock occurs – such as the one in January which measured 5.8 on the Richter Scale.

Football, which so usually provides great joy and escapism from dire straits around the world, is not so easily the ▸

Success...the national team tours the capital after victory in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup

Devastation...soldiers clear debris in Kathmandu, a week after the earthquake in May last year

VELCOME
NEPA
CHAM
Bangabandh

go-to distraction here.

When asked what effect the earthquake had had on Nepali football and the people involved in the game, All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) vice-president Karma Tsering Sherpa had a simple answer: "Nepali football is more impacted by corruption than the earthquake.

"During the earthquake time, definitely the activities were comparatively less, but the corruption to the impact to Nepal football is much worse."

Ganesh Thapa, a former Asian Football Confederation vice-president and ex-president of ANFA, was banned from all football activity for 10 years by FIFA in November as the swathe of anti-corruption investigations swamped world football following May 2015's watershed moment in Zurich.

Thapa was found by FIFA's ethics committee to have "committed various acts of misconduct over several years, including the solicitation and acceptance of cash payments from another football official, for both personal and family gain".

These acts were connected with the 2009 and 2011 elections for the FIFA executive committee at the Asian confederation's congress.

Yet, according to Sherpa, Thapa is still running the ANFA, just as he has done for the past 20 years. And this is despite even being under investigation by his own country's authorities over allegations of embezzlement of $5.8million and bribery. The charges were brought by the Parliament account committee – the highest body in Nepal. "But still, he has his car parking space at ANFA house," laments Sherpa.

Narendra Shrestha is officially acting as president, but Sherpa and a number of colleagues claim he is only playing his role as a puppet for Thapa.

Sherpa explains: "Just a day before he was officially banned, he chose one of his people as an acting president. He was not even in the executive committee.

"Normally there are four vice-presidents who are elected and one senior vice-president who is also elected – but he never elected a senior vice-president and then one vice-president died, so to replace him he brought in his guy. He's just staff at ANFA."

FIFA's investigation came almost two years after Sherpa and fellow vice-president Bijay Narayan Manandhar wrote to former investigatory chamber chair Michael Garcia and former secretary-general Jerome Valcke imploring them

> "Nepali football is more impacted by corruption than the earthquake"
>
> **ANFA vice-president Karma Tsering Sherpa**

Final...Nepal striker Nawayug Shrestha in action against Bahrain

Golden...fans greet the team on their return home after victory at the South Asian Games in February

Child's play...a pitch in the capital

to open up an "immediate investigation into potential breaches of the FIFA Code of Ethics and All Nepal Football Association statutes by ANFA president Ganesh Thapa and vice-president Lalit Krishna Shrestha".

Sherpa and his team collectively say that FIFA were "not responsive at all" in those early days. Later that month, in October 2014, Sherpa and Manandhar wrote to Garcia and Valcke again to express their extreme concern at a Reuters report that claimed the ANFA was the subject of an unsatisfactory audit by KPMG, for the year of 2012, in which unappropriated cash movements were identified. Since they stated no knowledge of this, they requested the relevant financial reports concerning ANFA by KPMG, FIFA and others.

They did receive a reply from Valcke – but only to say that FIFA would only communicate with a member association through its president, and assured the two men that ANFA was in possession of all the necessary documentation.

The intervention and news of the Parliament Account Committee investigation was enough to force Thapa to step down from all his positions for 120 days in November 2014 after FIFA said it would look into allegations of misconduct.

Whether in the background or at the forefront, it seems that Thapa is still managing to exert his control on Nepali football – and it is a hold that has damaged the progression of the sport in the country from grassroots all the way to the national team according to Sherpa, who also acts as president of the Nepal School Football Association.

"Every time under his era, the Nepali football team was going down" says Sherpa. "Now, all of a sudden, when he is 'out' and a few of the match fixers are out, the team is going up. Because he was doing micromanagement also, even he was selecting which players should play."

The fortunes of Nepal on the field have certainly picked up of late. The team began the year by picking up their first Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Bangladesh after beating Bahrain 3-0 in the Final on January 22. In February they claimed the country's third gold medal in football at the South Asian Games, beating hosts India in the Final 2-1 in Guwahati. The women's team also impressed at the 12th edition of the Games, clinching silver in their competition.

On the men's side, it's a stark contrast from the side who had not won any international fixtures from 2014 until this year and had only scored one goal. They currently stand 188th in the FIFA world rankings – a rise of four places from last year.

But the problems at grassroots are harder to turn around swiftly. One source revealed how he recently visited one of the district football associations in Nepal who were training with just one ball. The local FA president claimed he had organised a tournament in 2015 but had yet to be reimbursed for the costs by the ANFA.

It has been three years now since ANFA had a general assembly. Sherpa says this is because Thapa knows he could be outnumbered in such a meeting.

Sherpa added: "They tried to do a general assembly without us, and we went to the courts and they stopped them. They said if you want to do a general assembly, you have to have the elected members.

"That's why they are avoiding a general assembly right now and running ANFA through this guy who was appointed by Thapa. In three years there has been no AGM, in general assembly we have a majority. So they don't want to call a general assembly!"

When asked if he would be happy to take on the role of president should Thapa's influence at ANFA cease, Sherpa says "yes, of course", but he stresses that the fight is simply bringing about a new era of transparency.

He adds: "Our goal is to bring a structure that is financially affordable. We want to bring a democratic election and not do things like him, where he just goes to every region and collects signatures."

Change could be more forthcoming in the region with a new president at the head of FIFA. Gianni Infantino's defeat of AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa could be seen as a boost for Nepal's efforts, given the lack of support they were afforded by Asian football's governing body in their bid to oust Thapa.

"Without any single help from AFC, we managed to almost kick him out," says Sherpa. "We know we are on the right track and we will. Sooner or later, we will beautify this association."

Will Infantino's election mean a new dawn for Nepali football? Sherpa certainly hopes so, even after the ANFA officially announced it was voting for Sheikh Salman. "Infantino helped to introduce financial fair play in Europe," says Sherpa. "And, based on my information, he is a guy who believes in system, transparency and collective leadership.

"This is exactly our agenda in Nepali football too. He was a successful man leading UEFA and now we need to see and hope that he will replicate his success in world football too. In an interview he said: 'I'm not the European candidate, I'm not the UEFA candidate. I'm a football person, so I feel that I am the candidate for football.' So I believe his new leadership will be fruitful to the world of football."

Those in the sport will wait to see if Infantino can turn his bold promises into sweeping reforms that will help to elevate the damaged image of FIFA.

Meanwhile, nations across the footballing world face a similar fight as the quest for greater transparency in sport governance intensifies. WS

Disgraced...former FIFA president Sepp Blatter (left) and Ganesh Thapa

FOOTBALL'S MOST WANTED

100 players who could be on the move this summer

WORDS: Nick Bidwell, Gavin Hamilton & John Holmesdale

YAYA TOURE

The four-times African Footballer of the Year is unlikely to be powering forward for Man City next season. After four outstanding campaigns at the Etihad Stadium, the Ivorian midfield colossus has frequently been in semi-detached mode this term, and with his old Barcelona nemesis, Pep Guardiola, soon to take over in East Manchester, the 33-year-old has even more reason to pack his bags. A switch to China or Italy is a possibility, as is a stint in MLS with New York Red Bulls, New York City or Orlando City.

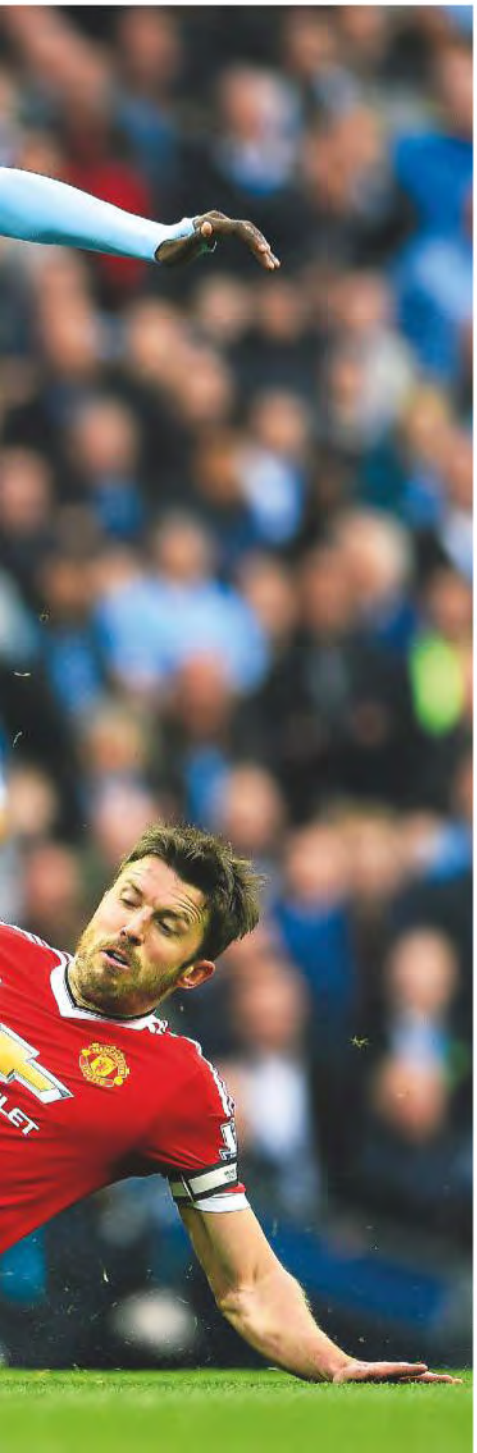
BAILING OUT

The players heading for a new challenge

FERNANDO
A return to Porto is on the cards for the Manchester City reserve.

DIEGO COSTA
Atletico Madrid could welcome back their controversial former striker after a frustrating season at Chelsea.

MARC-ANDRE TER STEGEN
Unhappy at only playing cup games for Barca, the German goalkeeper could solve a problem for a number of English clubs.



United exit...Juan Mata

ANDER HERRERA
Atletico Madrid are keeping tabs on the classy Manchester United midfielder.

JUAN MATA
If Jose Mourinho takes over at Old Trafford, a return to Spain could be on the cards, with Atletico Madrid and Valencia leading the chase.

CHRISTIAN BENTEKE
Liverpool's out-of-favour striker could find himself a new home elsewhere in the Premier League.

MEHDI BENATIA
Bayern's Moroccan defender could return to former club Roma.

DANI ALVES
Barcelona's flying full-back is said to favour one last European challenge.

YOUNG TALENTS

The youngsters set to move to a bigger stage

FELIPE ANDERSON
Lazio could cash in on their prize asset, with Manchester United leading the chase for the Brazilian midfielder.

JOSIP BREKALO
The Dinamo Zagreb teenager has been watched by a number of top clubs, notably Borussia Dortmund and Arsenal.

YUNUS MALLI
Mainz's young Turkish international almost joined Dortmund in the January window.

Asset...Felipe Anderson

TIMO WERNER
Stuttgart's Germany under-21 striker has attracted interest from Dortmund and moneybags RB Leipzig.

WENDELL
The Bayer Leverkusen left-back has been linked to both Real Madrid and Barcelona.

DIOGO JOTA
The young Pacos Ferreira attacker is tipped to join Atletico Madrid or Benfica.

ANDRE GOMES
The Valencia midfielder has been heavily linked with Juventus.

NABIL FEKIR
The Lyon youngster is reported to be high on PSG's wish-list.

MITCHELL DIJKS
Leicester City are said to be watching the Ajax left-back.

PIONE SISTO
Dortmund lead the race for Midtjylland's speedy winger.

SAIDO BERAHINO
West Brom are set to finally cash in on their talented forward.

ADRIAN MARIN
Barcelona are closely monitoring the young Villarreal full-back.

KEITA BALDE
The Lazio youngster, a former Barcelona academy product, has been linked with a number of English clubs.

OUSMANE DEMBELE
In his first season as a professional, the 18-year-old Rennes winger has taken Ligue 1 by storm, with his vivacity and goals making him a cult figure at Roazhon Park, and club presidential advisor Mikael Silvestre comparing him to a young Cristiano Ronaldo. Bayern Munich have made enquiries and Barcelona scouts were in Brittany to see him score a brilliant hat-trick against Nantes recently, while Silvestre's old team Manchester United are also in the hunt.

GOOD-VALUE SIGNINGS

Players who should cost no more than €10m

AMADOU DIAWARA
Incredibly mature teenager, who in just two years has gone from playing for a church team in his native Guinea to starring as a defensive midfielder for Bologna in the Italian top flight. Another feather in the cap of Bologna director of sport and talent-spotter supreme Pantaleo Corvino, the African is attracting attention from a slew of continental big-hitters, including Chelsea, Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur, Juventus and Schalke. There's not a moment to waste, however, as his price is rising fast.

LASSANA DIARRA
The veteran midfielder's form for Marseille has seen him linked to Paris Saint-Germain.

MATZ SELS
Southampton are said to be watching the young Gent goalkeeper.

JONAS HECTOR
The German left-back is set for an upgrade from Cologne to Wolfsburg.

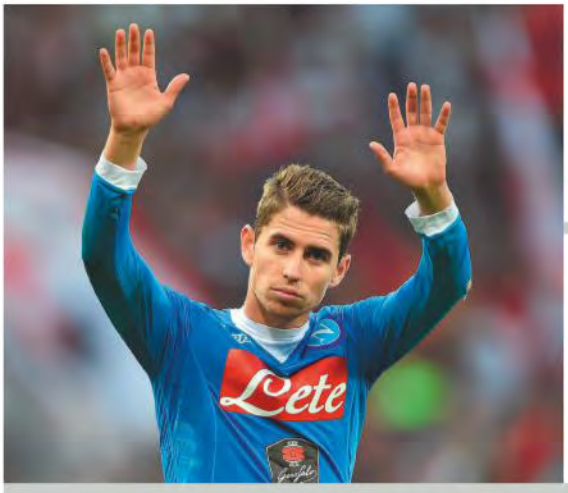
SAMUEL UMTITI
Barcelona have been scouting Lyon's French under-21 defender.

PIOTR ZIELINSKI
Udinese's Polish attacking midfielder is being tracked by Roma.

ANWAR EL GHAZI
Milan are set to move for the Ajax winger.

HAKIM ZIYECH
Schalke are the favourites to land Twente's talented Dutch-Moroccan midfielder.

JOAO MARIO
Sporting's talented midfielder is a reported target for Atletico Madrid.



MID-RANGE SIGNINGS

€10-20m bracket players set to join the big time

JOSE GIMENEZ
Atletico's young Uruguayan defender is a reported target for Chelsea and Barcelona.

GRZEGORZ KRYCHOWIAK
Sevilla's versatile defensive midfielder would add steel to Arsenal's squad.

YOURI TIELEMANS
Anderlecht could cash in on their highly-rated midfielder.

ISLAM SLIMANI
Sporting's Algerian striker has attracted interest from Premier League clubs.

MICHY BATSHUAYI
Marseille will demand a hefty fee from the English clubs who have taken an interest in their lively young Belgian striker.

JORGINHO
Napoli's midfield holder cum passing machine is reported to be a target for Real Madrid and Arsenal. Born in Brazil, but now a naturalised Italian, the 24-year-old has made remarkable progress since joining the Neapolitans from Verona early in 2014 and, according to his agent, he still has a chance of being included in the Azzurri squad for Euro 2016.

WILLIAM CARVALHO
The Sporting midfielder has long been tipped for a move to the Premier League.

HAKAN CALHANOGLU
Leverkusen's free-kick wizard has been linked to Barca and Manchester United.

SAUL NIGUEZ
Atletico could cash in, with Arsenal and Manchester United chasing the midfielder.

JACK BUTLAND
Stoke City recently offered the England international goalkeeper a new contract to see off potential interest from Liverpool and others.

SADIO MANE
Southampton resisted bids for the Senegal striker in January but may cash in this summer, with Manchester United making enquiries in the past.

Cash in...Saul Niguez

JEFFREY BRUMA
Internazionale are reported to be scouting PSV's ex-Chelsea defender.

BERND LENO
Ambitious Red Bull Leipzig are lining up the Leverkusen keeper.

DOMENICO BERARDI
Sassuolo are set to cash in on the striker, with Internazionale and Spurs keen.

MANCHESTER CITY
The arrival of Pep Guardiola this summer is likely to see a clear-out, with a number of new signings. Guardiola sees Dortmund's **Ilkay Gundogan** (above right), with a €27million buyout clause, as excellent value. Ajax's **Riechedly Bazoer** is also under consideration and an alternative would be Bayern maestro **Thiago Alcantara**. Defence is likely to be a key focus of City's activity, with centre-backs **John Stones** (Everton), **Aymeric Laporte** (Athletic Bilbao), **Marc Bartra** (Barcelona) and **Kostas Manolas** (Roma) all being considered, along with Dutch full-back **Jetro Willems** (PSV).

ATTRACTING THE BIG BUCKS

Big-name movers who will cost more than €20m

EDEN HAZARD
Frederic Hermel, a journalist with French daily paper *L'Equipe* and long-time confidante of Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane insists the Chelsea attacking midfielder already has an "agreement in principle" to head to the Bernabeu in the summer. Hazard, also tracked by the voracious headhunters at Paris Saint-Germain, hits all the right notes as far as "Zizou" is concerned and the French World Cup winner was gushing in his praise of the Belgian last year, commenting: "After, Messi and Ronaldo, Hazard is my favourite player. He's spectacular."

ALEXANDRE LACAZETTE
Lyon are set to cash in on their young striker, with a number of English clubs preparing to meet the asking price.

ALVARO MORATA
Real Madrid have a buy-back clause on the Spanish striker, but Juventus may prefer to sell to Arsenal or Tottenham.

PAUL POGBA
Barcelona are favourites to sign the Juventus midfielder but agent Mino Raiola may try to encourage a bidding war with Manchester City and Real Madrid.

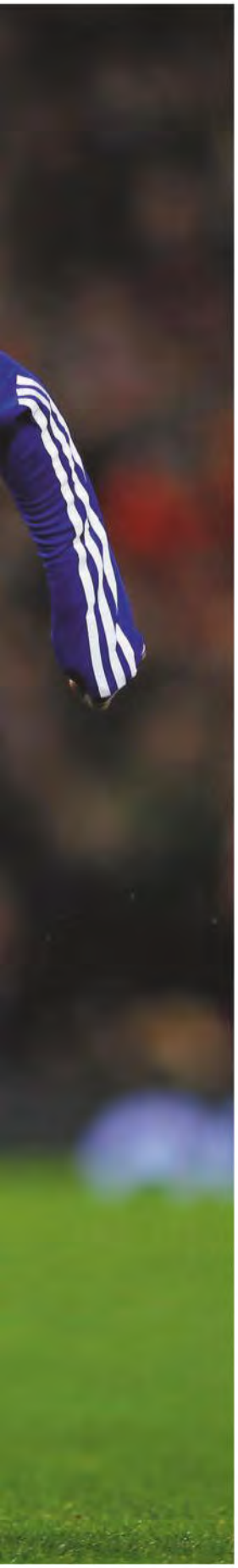
Bidding war...Paul Pogba

EDINSON CAVANI
Frustrated at playing second fiddle to Zlatan Ibrahimovic at PSG, the Uruguayan will attract interest from England and Italy.

PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG
The prolific Dortmund striker has hinted at a move to Real Madrid – assuming the Spanish club can delay their transfer ban.

ISCO
Real Madrid are reported to be preparing to sell the midfielder amid interest from both the Manchester clubs, and Arsenal and Chelsea.

JAMES RODRIGUEZ
Real Madrid could let the out-of-favour Colombian join Manchester United.



AXEL WITSEL
The combative Belgian midfielder could swap Zenit and Russia for the Premier League, with Tottenham Hotspur leading the chase.

OSCAR
The Brazilian could be part of a Chelsea summer clear-out, with Juventus keen on his services.

TONI KROOS
The Germany midfielder would be the big-name signing craved by Manchester United this summer.

DAVID DE GEA
After last summer's transfer debacle, the Spanish keeper remains high on Real Madrid's wish-list.

MARIO GOTZE
Bayern insist their record signing is staying but Liverpool and Jurgen Klopp may try to tempt him. Atletico and Juventus are also likely to be interested.

GONZALO HIGUAIN
The Argentinian is enjoying his best-ever season and he has a £60m buyout clause but Napoli may invite clubs to test their resolve with an offer.

CHELSEA
A new era at Stamford Bridge, with a new coach. Injecting dynamism into midfield will be the priority for the new boss, with the likes of **Miralem Pjanic** (Roma), **Radja Nainggolan** (Roma, above) and **Arturo Vidal** (Bayern Munich) all being considered. **Riyad Mahrez** (Leicester City) is a reported £20m target after his sparkling season in the Premier League, while **Leonardo Bonucci** (Juventus) would be an experienced defensive reinforcement. Striker **Simone Zaza** (Juventus) has also been suggested as an attacking addition.

SOUTH AMERICANS
Players heading for Europe this summer

GABRIEL BARBOSA
The teenage Santos striker known as "Gabigol" says Barcelona is his preferred destination but other European clubs will try to persuade him otherwise.

LUAN
The Gremio attacker has attracted interest from a number of Premier League clubs.

ALISSON
The Internacional goalkeeper was close to joining Roma in January and could now make the move this summer.

EDER BALANTA
The Colombian centre-back is set to leave River Plate and a host of English clubs are monitoring his availability.

ESTEBAN PAVEZ
La Liga clubs Celta and Getafe are watching the Colo Colo midfielder.

GIOVANI LO CELSO
The Rosario Central attacker is being monitored by Italian clubs Juventus and Sassuolo.

RODRIGO BENTANCUR
Real Madrid lead the La Liga chase for the Boca Juniors midfielder.

EMANUEL MAMMANA
The River Plate defender is attracting interest from English and Italian clubs.

Interest...Emanuel Mammana

MARCELO BAROVERO
Sevilla are reported to be close to signing the experienced River Plate keeper.

BLAS RIVEROS
Benfica are reported to be monitoring Olimpia's young Paraguayan defender.

LUCAS LIMA
The Santos playmaker was one of the outstanding players in last year's Brazilian championship, earning a call-up to the national squad. He turned down a big-money move to China in the January window and is reported to be close to signing for Napoli.

FREE TRANSFERS

Players moving on at the end of their contracts

SOFIANE FEGHOULI
Franco-Algerian right-winger or attacking midfielder who, after six years with Valencia, can walk away on a Bosman free this summer. Never short of self-confidence, he has claimed that Barcelona are tracking him, but a more plausible destination could be Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool or Italy, where Internazionale are rumoured to have offered him a four-year-contract worth between €2.5-3m a season.

HATEM BEN ARFA
Outstanding for Nice this season, but his short-term deal runs out this summer.

MAXWELL
The Brazilian full-back is set to leave Paris Saint-Germain and head back to Brazil.

STEVE MANDANDA
The keeper's contract with Marseille runs out this summer. Liverpool and Crystal Palace are watching developments.

ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC
The enigmatic Swede has yet to agree a new deal with Paris Saint-Germain and has strongly hinted that he would like to play in London.

London calling...Zlatan Ibrahimovic

DANIEL DIDAVI
The Stuttgart midfielder's availability has alerted Leverkusen and Wolfsburg.

GREGORY VAN DER WIEL
Internazionale are reported to be close to signing Paris Saint-Germain's Dutch full-back.

ANDRIJA ZIVKOVIC
Partizan's talented teenage midfielder has plenty of suitors, with Benfica favourites to sign him.

MIGUEL VELOSO
The Portuguese midfield enforcer is set to leave Dynamo Kiev, with Fiorentina, Milan and Villarreal keen to sign him.

TONNY VILHENA
The Feyenoord midfielder is a target for Leicester and Swansea.

BAYERN MUNICH
It will be all change, with Carlo Ancelotti replacing Pep Guardiola. Hertha Berlin's Czech midfielder **Vladimir Darida** is a target, as is PSG's young Brazilian defender **Marquinhos**. Wolfsburg full-back **Ricardo Rodriguez** has also been scouted. At the more fanciful end of the spectrum, Bayern could spend big on Benfica's teenage sensation **Renato Sanches** (right) and Everton striker **Romelu Lukaku**.

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Slight advantage

Small of frame but big on talent, Antoine Griezmann of France could have a huge part to play on home soil at this summer's Euros

WORDS: HOWARD JOHNSON

On Antoine Griezmann's forearm there is a tattoo in Arabic. It is a quote from a famous French writer who shares a first name with the Atletico Madrid and France striker.

Author of world-famous story *The Little Prince*, Antoine De Saint-Exupery effortlessly captures life's awesome wonder. No wonder, then, that Griezmann decided to ink himself with Saint-Exupery's charming line: "*Fais de ta vie un rêve, et fais de ton rêve une réalité*",

meaning "make your life a dream, and make your dream a reality".

If that has been Griezmann's mantra, then so far so good. At the age of 25, most of his dreams have already come true. A leading light in France national coach Didier Deschamps' squad and a hero in his adopted homeland of Spain, with 1.8million followers on Twitter, Griezmann has already shown why he is tipped to be one of the big stars of Euro 2016.

"He always knows how to hurt the opposition," says Diego Simeone, his coach at Atletico – and the animated Argentinian is not kidding. In front of goal, Griezmann has the kind of ice in his veins that others can only dream of and is a player who never needs asking twice to set the net bulging.

Griezmann is no physical, bullying presence smashing his way onto the goalscoring leader board, though. He relies on blistering pace, all-round athleticism and the audacity to try his luck from anywhere and everywhere.

"I try to play between the lines, to get on the front foot and attack defenders like Messi," he says.

These are the skills that have really excited Deschamps, not to mention the ever-growing number of French football fans who are loudly singing his praises.

Ever since he first started kicking a ball with his local team, l'Entente Charney Macon 71, at the age of six, questions have been asked about Griezmann's physical suitability for football. After joining bigger club UF Macon two years later, the young Antoine had numerous trials at professional French clubs, only to be sent packing each time for being too frail.

It was at the age of 13 that his luck finally turned as he was spotted by Real Sociedad playing in a tournament in Paris. Although he was wearing the colours of Montpellier that day, the Basque club's scouts were impressed enough by what they saw and offered the teenager a two-week trial, before deciding to take a chance on him and start him out on the road to a professional career.

Sociedad hail from San Sebastian, a city of 186,000 inhabitants that hugs the French border up in the north east of Spain. Aware that Griezmann was still young, and that his home town of Macon was situated in the east of France, over 500miles away, the club placed him in a French school just over the border in Bayonne to help him acclimatise to such a big change in life.

But at the start of the 2007-08 season, and after two years of hard work from the youngster, Sociedad decided Griezmann was ready to make the step up to the cub's reserve team. He went on to perform well enough over two campaigns in the Spanish third tier to be awarded his first professional contract at the age of 18.

Griezmann did not have to wait long to make the step up to first-team football,

> "He made mistakes, as any youngster does, but he always had a big personality and loads of confidence"
>
> **Martin Lasarte, who gave Griezmann his debut at Real Sociedad**

Grounded...Griezmann takes a knock against Belgium

Timeline

SEP 2, 2009
Makes his debut for Real Sociedad as a substitute in a 2-0 Spanish Cup defeat by Rayo Vallecano.

SEP 27, 2009
Scores his first goal for Sociedad, in the 39th minute of a 2-0 league win against Huesca.

MAR 2, 2010
Makes his debut for France under-19s as they draw 0-0 with Ukraine. Two days later, he scores in a 2-1 win against the same opposition.

JUN 13, 2010
Real Sociedad are promoted to La Liga as champions of the second division with a 2-0 win at home to Celta Vigo.

JUL 30, 2010
Helps hosts France beat Spain 2-1 in the Final of the European Under-19 Championship in front of 20,000 people.

French fancy... showing off his skills during a friendly against England at Wembley

Sociedad star...fooling Manchester United's Shinji Kagawa in a Champions League group match

Full out...battling Portugal's Nuno Reis in the 2011 Under-20 World Cup

either. Sociedad's Uruguayan coach at the time, Martin Lasarte, had his hands tied a little bit because of an unexpected number of injuries, so he added the Frenchman to his pre-season squad for the club's 2009-10 second-division campaign.

It proved to be a good move. Make that better than good, actually. Griezmann scored four times in five pre-season games to make the Sociedad coaching staff sit up and take notice.

He went on to make his first-team debut as a 79th-minute substitute in a 2-0 Spanish Cup loss to Rayo Vallecano in September 2009. Four days later he again came off the bench, in a goalless league draw with Murcia, before finally getting the nod for his first league start, against Huesca on September 27. Real won 2-0 and Griezmann, wearing the number 27 shirt, found the back of the net with a fine angled right-foot drive from just outside the penalty area.

"I was convinced that he was ready when I brought him through to the first team," says Lasarte, who most recently coached Universidad de Chile. "He made mistakes, as any youngster does, but he always had a big personality and loads of confidence."

By the end of the 2009-10 campaign, Griezmann had established himself as a first choice, becoming an important part of the Sociedad team that clinched promotion as champions, ahead of Hercules and Levante. With Lyon, Manchester United and Liverpool reportedly tracking him, the club moved quickly to tie him to a long contract through to 2015.

Those eye-catching performances in Spain had not gone unnoticed in his native country either, and in July 2010 Griezmann was called up by the French under-19s coach, Francis Smerecki, for that summer's European Championship on home soil.

After scoring twice in a 5-0 rout of Austria in the group stage, Griezmann played a big part in the tournament as France went on to beat Spain 2-1 in the

OCT 25, 2010

Scores his first Liga goal for Sociedad, in a 3-0 win against Deportivo La Coruna.

AUG 10, 2011

Scores France's only goal in their last-16 win over Ecuador in the Under-20 World Cup. France reach the semi-finals but lose to Portugal.

JUN 1, 2013

A first-half goal in the last game of the season at Deportivo secures a 1-0 win for Sociedad and ensures Champions League football.

Final in Caen, in front of over 20,000 spectators. And even though Griezmann had to come off injured at half-time, he knew he had made his mark. His ambitions, however, were already much greater.

"That was a big moment for me," he recalls. "But I said to myself at the time, 'OK, you're in the under-19s now, but you need to push on to the national team, to keep working hard and keep believing in the big dream.'"

Back in club colours, he made his top-flight debut with Sociedad in a 1-0 win against Villarreal in August 2010. But he had to wait until the eighth match of the campaign, a 3-0 home win over Deportivo La Coruna, to get his first goal. Clearly thrilled, Griezmann decided to celebrate by jumping into the driver's seat of a promotional car parked on the running track that surrounded the pitch. His team-mates soon followed him and the celebration quickly became a YouTube sensation.

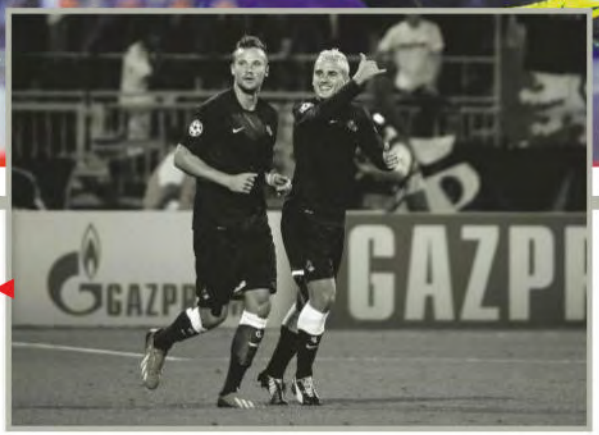
Photo: Offside Sports Photography/Marca Media

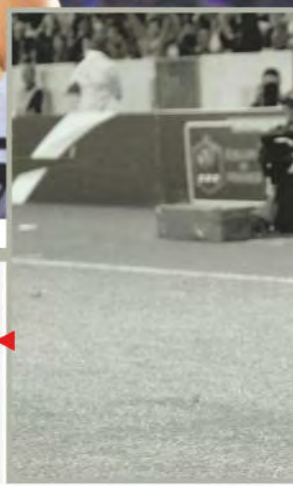
Motoring...celebrates his first goal for Sociedad by jumping into a car parked on the side of the pitch

Griezmann finished his first campaign in La Liga having made 37 league appearances, scoring seven goals, and establishing a welcome pattern of missing very few games. Despite his slight frame, he has had a happy knack of avoiding serious injury to date and has consistently been fit to appear on the team sheet.

In the following two campaigns with Sociedad, in 2011-12 and 2012-13, the Frenchman established himself as the club's leading striker. With French coach Philippe Montanier in charge after arriving from Valenciennes in June 2011, Griezmann signed a contract extension at the start of the 2012-13 season that tied him to the club until 2016.

But Sociedad started the campaign badly, losing six of their first 10 games and





AUG 20, 2013

Scores away to Lyon in the first leg of the Champions League play-off round to help Sociedad qualify for the group stage.

MAR 5, 2014

Makes his full international debut for France in a 2-0 friendly win against Holland at Stade de France.

JUN 1, 2014

Scores his first goal for France, in a 1-1 draw with Paraguay. Follows that up with two more as Jamaica are thrashed 8-0.

That's my boy... Sociedad coach Philippe Montanier hails a Griezmann winner against Deportivo

finding themselves in the relegation zone. Leaning on Griezmann as his leading striker, Montanier nonetheless managed to turn Sociedad's season around. After a narrow 4-3 defeat at Real Madrid in January 2013, the team then went on a 15-game unbeaten run.

When Griezmann notched the only goal of the game in the last match of the season against Deportivo La Coruna, Sociedad clinched a remarkable fourth-place finish to qualify for the Champions League play-off round. His personal achievements were equally impressive as he became the fifth-youngest player to have made 100 appearances in La Liga, scoring 11 goals in all competitions throughout the season and weighing in with five assists, his best tally to date.

Yet while all was rosy at club level, Griezmann suddenly found himself in hot water on the international stage. His three goals in five games for the French under-21s weren't enough to guarantee the team's qualification for the 2013 Euros as France crashed out in the play-offs against Norway.

And it soon emerged in the French media that Griezmann had joined four other players – Yann M'Vila, Chris Mavinga, Wissam Ben Yedder and M'Baye Niang – on an unauthorised jaunt from the squad hotel in Normandy to Le Crystal nightclub in Paris, over 200km away, just three days before the crucial Norway match. The French Football Association took a dim view of the matter and suspended Griezmann from all national-team activity until December 31, 2013.

They say the best way for a sportsman to answer his critics is out on the pitch and Griezmann was clearly on a mission as the 2013-14 season got under way.

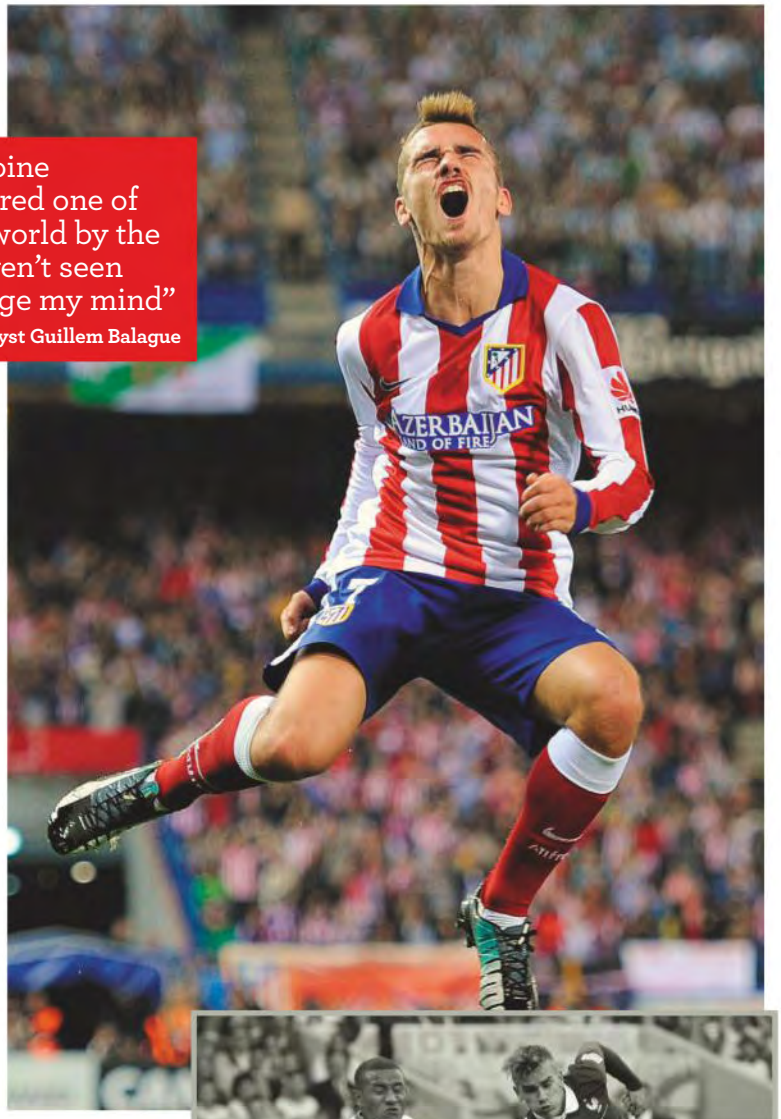
If he was out to make a point, then he could not have made it any clearer than by scoring in an early Champions League play-off game with an athletic overhead kick from the edge of the penalty area. That the goal was in France, against Lyon – the team he had followed as a boy – was nothing short of a masterstroke in terms of increasing his media profile.

Despite Sociedad finishing bottom of their Champions League group, it still proved to be Griezmann's breakout season. He scored 20 goals in 49 games as Sociedad finished a creditable seventh in La Liga. And once his international ban was lifted, Deschamps wasted no time in awarding him a first senior cap, in a 2-0 win against Holland at the end of February 2014.

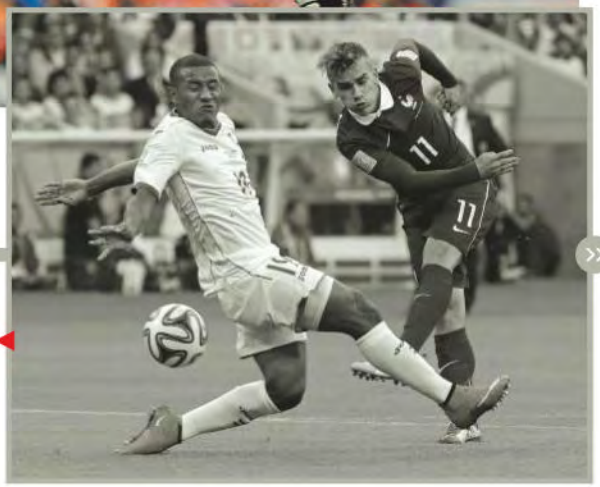
After yet another scintillating domestic season, it was no surprise that Griezmann made the French squad for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. After scoring three goals in warm-up games, he went on to appear in all five World Cup games, either starting or from the bench. And while he

> "I've already said that Antoine Griezmann will be considered one of the top five players in the world by the end of this year – and I haven't seen anything to make me change my mind"
>
> **Spanish football analyst Guillem Balague**

Head first...beating Espanyol keeper Kiko Casilla



Unbridled joy... Griezmann celebrated his first season with Atletico Madrid by scoring 25 goals



JUN 15, 2014

Makes his World Cup finals debut as France beat Honduras 3-0. They are knocked out by eventual champions Germany in the last eight.

failed to score or grab an assist, he still headed home with a reputation as one of world football's most promising young stars tucked in his back pocket.

Atletico Madrid already knew all about his potential and on July 27 they announced his transfer on a six-year contract for the €30m buy-out clause fee set in his previous deal. Atletico coach Simeone was quick to tell the world of his joy, claiming: "Antoine's a brilliant player. He's really quick and he'll give us lots of options in attack."

If the big price tag and such ringing endorsements were weighing on the player's mind, then Griezmann did not show it. Despite a slow start to the season, in which Simeone introduced him gradually into the starting line-up with 15 minutes here and there, the 2014-15 campaign saw the new boy deliver his best-ever stats, with 25 goals in 54 games.

Perhaps even more impressively, Griezmann notched 22 of those goals in just 37 Liga appearances. These included a first Atletico hat-trick in a 4-1 win at

In tears...consolation from skipper Hugo Lloris after France go out to Germany at Brazil 2014

Talent...volleying home against Getafe

"He always knows how to hurt the opposition"

Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone

Athletic Bilbao and three consecutive braces – against Malaga, Deportivo and Elche – in April 2015 that saw him named in the Liga team of the month.

Griezmann's first season in Madrid succeeded in elevating him to the position of a genuine superstar, a status that was further confirmed just ahead of this season when fans voted via the Internet for him to feature alongside Lionel Messi on the French cover of the leading computer game FIFA16.

On the field, this term has once again seen Griezmann in incredible form. With over two months to play, he had already notched 20 goals, making him *Los Colchoneros*' top scorer by a huge distance from midfielder Saul, who had chipped in with just six.

Unsurprisingly, and despite Simeone having admitted his astonishment that Griezmann wasn't included on the 23-man shortlist for the Ballon d'Or award in October, there is no shortage of admirers among the very biggest and best European clubs.

"I've never been called or sent a message by any club and I've never really discussed anything with my agent," says Griezmann diplomatically. "But the club recently offered to improve my salary and I was happy to accept." All the same, Chelsea have supposedly been making eyes at him for a while as pundits everywhere continue to purr about just how good Griezmann really is.

"I've already said that Antoine Griezmann will be considered one of the top five players in the world by the end of this year," says Spanish football analyst Guillem Balague. "And I haven't seen anything to make me change my mind."

Griezmann himself says: "If I want to be the next Falcao or the next Aguero at Atletico, I know I've still got a lot to do. But the coach gives me a lot of confidence, and tells me that I'm an important player. But he also says I have to do better

AUG 19, 2014

Makes his Atletico debut in the first leg of the Spanish Super Cup away to Real Madrid. It finishes 1-1 and Atletico win the return 1-0.

SEP 17, 2014

Scores his first goal for the club as Atletico are beaten 3-2 by Olympiakos in the Champions League.

DEC 21, 2014

Scores his first hat-trick in La Liga as Atletico come from behind to beat Athletic Bilbao 4-1.

NOV 13, 2015

Plays in the 2-0 win against Germany at Stade de France, on the night terrorists kill more than 120 people in Paris.

than I've ever done before."

Imagine that. If there really is still more to come from Antoine Griezmann, then that will put the fear of God into European defenders and joy into the hearts of football romantics around the world. WS

Top boss...with Atletico coach Diego Simeone

the numbers game

FRANCE

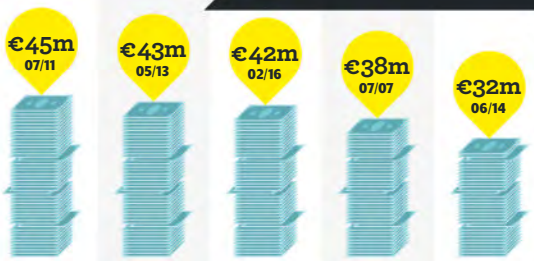
22

CAPS

GOALS

6

STRIKERS SOLD BY ATLETICO



Sergio Aguero	Radamel Falcao	Jackson Martinez	Fernando Torres	Diego Costa
Man City	Monaco	Guangzhou Ev	Liverpool	Chelsea

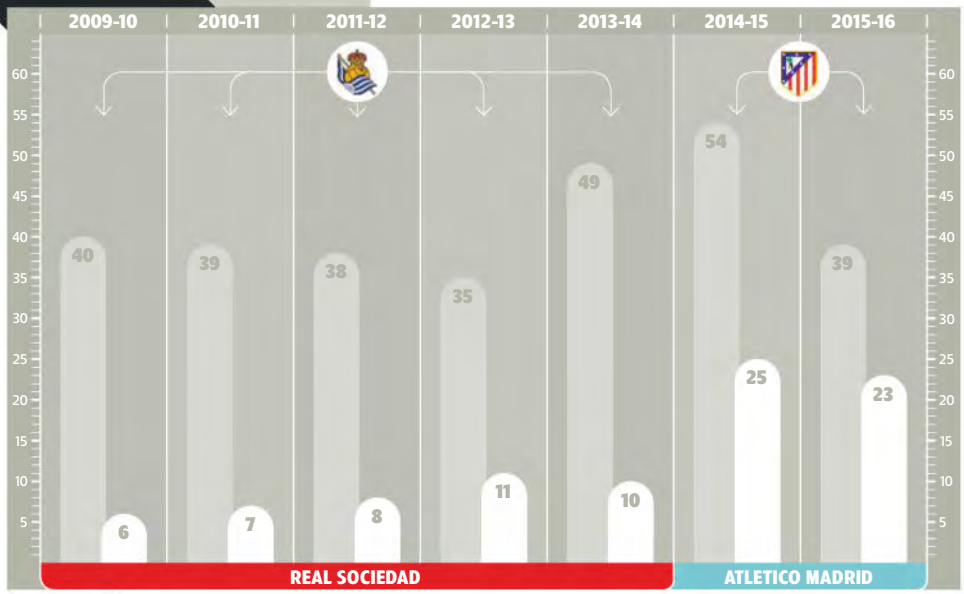
€30m

His move to Atletico Madrid in 2014 earned Real Sociedad their biggest ever transfer fee

HONOURS

Griezmann's goal haul last season was the best by a Frenchman in La Liga, topping Karim Benzema's 21 for Real Madrid in the 2011-12 campaign, and beating the likes of Thierry Henry and Zinedine Zidane before him

GAMES & GOALS



GAMES GOALS (*up to & including 14.03.16)

Hodgson's dilemma

England's manager is under pressure to field an entertaining team but, says Jonathan Wilson, the options point to a more cautious approach

Emerging...Eric Dier (in white) in action against France

Two incidents highlight the arrogance that still hangs around English football and has prevented the national side from playing to its maximum.

The first came at Wembley, in 2011, in Fabio Capello's second-last game. Facing world champions Spain, the Italian fielded a 4-5-1 with Scott Parker deployed just in front of the back four, and Phil Jones and Frank Lampard used to press from central midfield. The plan worked. Spain never found their rhythm and, while it could be argued they were a little unfortunate, the visitors were beaten 1-0. Capello, however, was condemned by a significant numbers of journalists and fans for having adopted such a negative approach.

The second was in Kiev, two years later. Roy Hodgson bounded into the post-match press conference, having seen his side frustrate Ukraine with a 0-0 draw that left England needing to beat Montenegro and Poland to secure automatic qualification for the World Cup. He saw it as a job well done, while the reaction was, at best, ambivalent.

There remains a lingering and corrosive sense that there is no side that England should not be engaging in open combat and soundly thrashing. And it's the same attitude that led, a decade ago, to the selection of unbalanced sides as Sven Goran Eriksson tried to accommodate all the stars of the golden generation, even when they manifestly didn't fit together. Good players, as the ancient lie has it, find a way of playing together – which is a myth exposed every time Real Madrid play Atletico Madrid.

Hodgson finds himself in an intriguing position. On the one hand, he has an England squad devoid of stars. Only Joe Hart and Wayne Rooney feel like automatic picks, and there are many who would argue that Rooney, even if he does recover from his knee injury in time for the Euros, shouldn't be, while Jack Butland and Fraser Forster are applying pressure on the goalkeeping position.

On the other, there is a wealth of options in certain key roles.

It's a situation that, despite 10 wins out of 10 in qualifying, has left expectations lowered, although the experience of the World Cup suggested they may not have been lowered enough. Drab friendly wins in the build-up to that tournament still brought howls of protest that seemed, regrettably, to persuade Hodgson to adopt a more attacking approach than he had perhaps initially intended.

What this England have, most abundantly, is pace, particularly in forward areas. Raheem Sterling, Jamie Vardy, Danny Welbeck and Daniel Sturridge are all fast. The question is, though, how to

Duo...Harry Kane (left) and Wayne Rooney

combine them with one or both of Harry Kane and Rooney.

Hodgson could pick two of them and go with a 4-4-2, but England lack wide midfielders. He could be gung-ho and pick four of them, in a 4-2-3-1. That, though, was the trap he fell into at the last World Cup, as though trying to appease those who demand England, whatever the circumstances, should swagger. The problem was Steven Gerrard and Jordan Henderson didn't offer the back four sufficient protection, leaving holes that Italy and Uruguay exploited.

The emergence of Eric Dier at least gives England a genuine holding option but still, the 4-3-3 Hodgson used before the World Cup and in Euro qualifying looks the more secure option. Strip away expectations and England's sense of status, and the rational way for them to play is on the break, utilising their pace in forward areas while making up for defensive deficiencies by weight of numbers. That means Kane or Rooney deployed as the central forward, flanked by two fliers to link to a deep-lying midfield three. That means either Kane or Rooney being left out (although Hodgson used Rooney on the right flank in the friendly win over France in November) and Vardy used wide or, more probably, from the bench. Dier then holds and the two players alongside him can be varied according to the opposition.

In qualifying, Hodgson tried Jack Wilshere, Jonjo Shelvey and Michael Carrick in that holding position. Carrick was perhaps the most convincing but his age and injury record count against him. With Wilshere's fitness in doubt and his general unfamiliarity in the role, Shelvey seems the obvious back-up for Dier, whose emergence has been so rapid that, having not been involved until November, he now seems an almost certain starter.

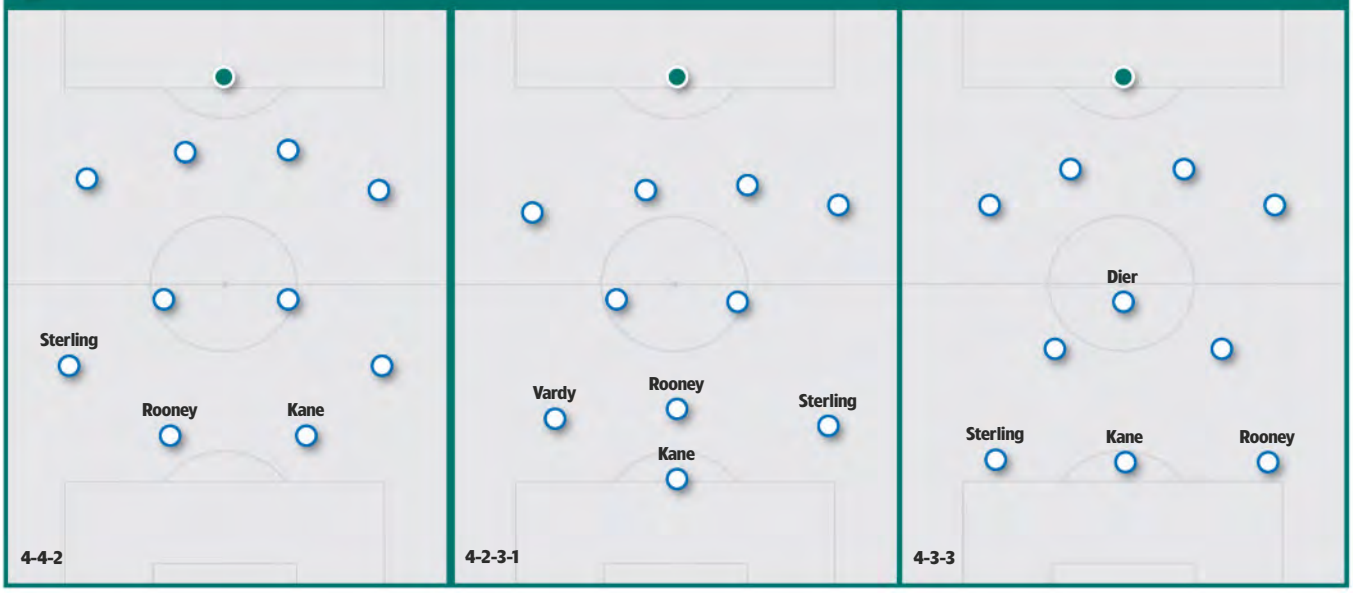
Ideally, if England aren't playing entirely to contain, that means a creator operating from deep and breaking forward: either Dele Alli or Ross Barkley. The other midfielder is then essentially an engine: Henderson, perhaps, or James Milner or Fabian Delph. That said, against France, Hodgson took the riskier option of fielding Alli and Barkley in front of Dier.

There will be those who demand more creativity and greater sophistication, but international football isn't club football. There isn't time for coaches to instil complicated formulae. The tactics have to be kept as simple as possible.

There's nothing clever about packing seven outfielders behind the ball and looking to use the pace England have on the break, but the lack of complication is part of the appeal. WS

Pace...Roy Hodgson instructs Raheem Sterling

ENGLAND'S OPTIONS



Sporting's chance

WORDS: Tom Kundert

Under coach Jesus Jorge and dynamic president Bruno De Carvalho, Sporting are once again a major force in Portuguese football

Just three years ago, the status of Sporting Clube de Portugal, which had once proudly competed toe-to-toe with Europe's finest, was at an all-time low.

As Porto and Benfica swept up the domestic honours, the standing and credibility of Sporting was being ▸

Green machine...Islam Slimani (centre) takes the acclaim after scoring against rivals Porto

Support...Sporting fans ahead of the big Lisbon clash with Benfica

visibly whittled away.

Sporting were simply unable to compete with their more powerful rivals. The team plunged to an unthinkable seventh-place finish in 2012-13 and years of boardroom mismanagement had put the financial viability of the entire institution at risk.

Then, on March 23, 2013 Bruno De Carvalho was elected as the club's new president. It is impossible to disassociate a sea change at Sporting with the arrival of Carvalho at the helm.

He immediately set about attacking every individual and entity he perceived as preventing Sporting from recapturing its past glories. And he hasn't stopped since. His fiercely confrontational methods are not pretty. One tirade against Porto president Pinto Da Costa insinuated he was going senile; accusations of Benfica bribing match officials have been commonplace; and he has instigated a one-man war against football investment funds and agents. Needless to say, Carvalho has collected numerous and deep-seated enemies along the way.

But there is no doubt he has transformed the club, both on and off the pitch. Under the *onda verde* ("green tide") slogan, the fan base has been re-energised, the club's talented young players are no longer wooed away at cut-price fees by unscrupulous agents, financial stability has been restored and, most important of all, Sporting are right back in the mix for trophies.

Triumph...keeper Rui Patricio parades the Portuguese Cup to delirious fans after last season's Final win over Braga

The sensational appointment of Jorge Jesus, the most successful coach in Portugal for the past decade, snatched from cross-town rivals Benfica, exemplified Carvalho's audacity in his quest to take Sporting back to the top.

An ex-Sporting player, as was his father, Jesus has strong emotional ties to the club. A short film shown on the giant screens at the stadium on the day he was presented, with footage of his father's playing days, almost reduced him to tears. "I can promise you that, from now onwards, Sporting will be competing for all the major honours in Portugal," he said.

The apparent match made in heaven

has served to further galvanise the supporters and bring real belief that something special is happening at the club.

That enthusiasm only grew as Sporting began the season at a canter, beating arch-rivals Benfica three times and seeing off Porto to spend the vast majority of the campaign at the table summit. However, Benfica have since come back strongly, setting up a thrilling season finale.

Whether it will end in triumph for the green half of Lisbon only time will tell. But there is an inescapable feeling that Carvalho will not stop his Sporting crusade until something gives.

Will his frenzied attempts to guarantee the pre-eminence of his club blow up in smoke? Or are we about to witness a definitive shift in the power structure of Portuguese football?

> "I can promise you that, from now on, Sporting will be competing for all the major honours in Portugal"
>
> **Jorge Jesus, on his appointment as coach**

It would not be the first time it has happened. A brief overview of the history of Portuguese football reveals three epochs of hegemony, one for each of the country's traditional "Big Three".

Sporting were the first of the triumvirate to achieve a sustained period of absolute dominance, the Alvalade club ruling supreme in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly in the years straddling the two decades, when they lifted the Portuguese championship seven times in eight seasons, fired by the legendary quintet of attacking players known as the *cinco violinos* ('five violins").

The "eternal derby"...Sporting versus Benfica

Jesus Correia, Manuel Vasques, Albano Pereira, Jose Travassos and goalscorer extraordinaire Fernando Peyroteo changed the history of Sporting and the face of Portuguese football, their relentless attacking and telepathic combination play making the Lions an irresistible force. Peyroteo's statistics especially make for eye-watering reading, as he scored a barely believable 543 goals in 334 games during his career.

From the moment Peyroteo, the first "violinist", made his debut to the time the last of the magnificent five, Travassos, hung up his boots, the Green and Whites won 10 championships and five Portuguese Cups. Playing together, the five did not lose a single game against Benfica, lost only once to Porto and were unbeaten at home. The club's annual pre-season tournament is named the Cinco Violinos in homage to the mythical fivesome.

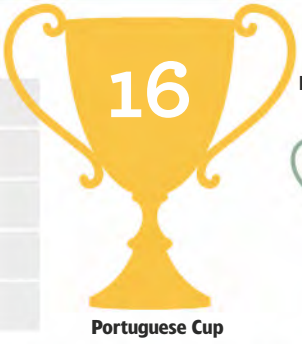
The glory years for Sporting ended when a Eusebio-inspired Benfica wrested the reins of power from their neighbours in the 1960s and 1970s, before Porto, under the trophy-laden, controversial and ongoing presidency of Da Costa exerted their stranglehold on the domestic game.

Porto's three-decade long empire of ascendency is in apparent decline as age

SPORTING 1934-2016

League champions

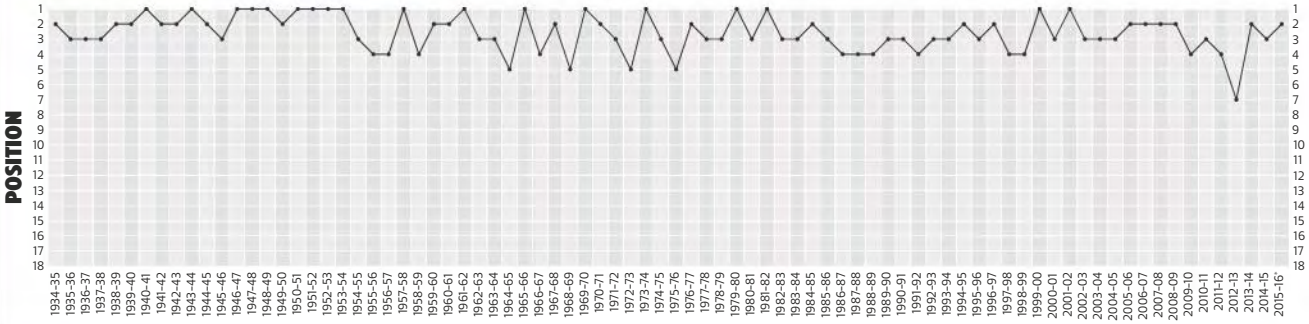
BENFICA	34
PORTO	27
SPORTING	18
BOAVISTA	1
BELENENSES	1



Portuguese Cup

European Cup-winners Cup

Portuguese Super Cup



*(*as of15.03.16)*

Great expectations... Cristiano Ronaldo shows early signs of his talent against Maritimo in 2002

starts to catch up with Da Costa, paving the way for a fascinating three-way tussle for supremacy.

Since 1970 Sporting have lifted the title only five times, which shows the enormity of the mission Carvalho has tasked himself with in bringing a sustained period of success to the Alvalade.

Not that the intervening years have been all doom and gloom. While collective triumphs were few and far between, Sporting earned worldwide acclaim for producing some of the greatest talents to grace the game, particularly when it comes to wingers. Paulo Futre, Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo are just three examples of footballers nurtured through the club's ranks who went on to achieve global stardom.

> The conveyor belt of talent flowing from the club's Alcohete academy shows no signs of slowing down

And the conveyor belt of outstanding talent flowing from the club's Alcochete academy, east of Lisbon on the other side of the River Tejo, shows no signs of slowing down. Sporting's success this season is built around the home-grown midfield trio of Adrien, William Carvalho and Joao Mario. It is not uncommon, even for the newly competitive Sporting, to line up with five players who came through the ranks.

What differs is that in the past the club's precociously talented prospects were sold too quickly and at too young an age to ▸

THE POWER CURVE

The key figures at Sporting

BRUNO DE CARVALHO
Hard-headed, brazen and lashing out at all perceived obstacles to Sporting's success, the president has collected bitter enemies in his three years at the helm, but his unflinching focus on bringing back the glory days of yesteryear has galvanised the club.

JORGE JESUS
Another prickly and fiercely ambitious individual, the coach vowed upon his appointment in the summer that "from now on there will be three serious contenders for the championship in Portugal". He is making good on his promise.

ADRIEN SILVA
The club captain's calm, albeit determined, demeanour in interviews contrasts sharply on the pitch where that calmness is nowhere to be seen. A vigorous competitor always in the heat of the battle.

OCTAVIO MACHADO
Straight-talking ex-Portugal international and former Porto and Sporting coach, the general manager happily toes the party line, with public tirades common the minute he believes they get unfair treatment.

AUGUSTO INACIO
Public relations manager and ex-Sporting coach who led the club to the 2000 title after an 18-year barren spell. He has now settled his previous differences with Jorge Jesus.

THE STADIUM

Home...Estadio Jose Alvalade

One of Portugal's newly-built stadia for Euro 2004, the inauguration of the 50,000-capacity Estadio Jose Alvalade proved a famous occasion. On 6 August 2003, Sporting beat Manchester United 3-1 in a pre-season friendly and an 18-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo put in a performance punctuated with moments of such mesmerising brilliance that it would persuade Alex Ferguson to take the Portuguese magician back with him to Old Trafford where he would begin his ascent towards global stardom.

Aesthetics play a big part in the Alvalade, with a mosaic multi-coloured design running through the whole complex, inside and out, save for the deep green undulating roof supported at each of the four corners by cables streaming down from massive metal pillars piercing far into the sky.

The facility as a whole is much more than a football stadium, incorporating a multi-sports pavilion, swimming pool, health club, clinic, shopping centre and cinema complex, making it a hive of activity not only on match days.

Waiting game... fans gather on the Alvalade steps

The daring colour scheme is in marked contrast to the staid all-red tones of Benfica's Estadio da Luz, just four kilometres down the road. That the two stadium designs are so jarringly different is apt for two clubs who have spent a large chunk of Portuguese football history ferociously vying with each other for supremacy. It is not by chance that the Sporting-Benfica clash is known as the "eternal derby" in Portugal.

That rivalry has only intensified this season following the "defection" of coach Jorge Jesus from the red half to the green half of the city, with Sporting's contract rebel Andre Carrillo going in the opposite direction, and the two teams evenly matched in a thrilling title race.

Safety measure... a sunken walkway helps keep fans away from the pitch

Lisbon landmark...the stadium holds 52,000

bring either sporting success or meaningful financial gain. In contrast, the new regime has striven to protect their young pearls by routinely inserting buyout clauses of upwards of €45million in the contracts of their biggest assets, while complementing the local talent with experienced, proven and – by Sporting's standards – costly reinforcements.

But the contribution to the current vibrancy made by Jorge Jesus cannot be underestimated. As at Benfica, the coach has his team playing cohesive and easy-on-the-eye attacking football, while on an individual basis several players are performing at levels few believed they were capable of attaining.

Striker Islam Slimani is a case in point. Bought for €300,000 less than three years ago, Sporting turned down six bids of up to €24million for the Algerian in the January transfer window.

Significantly, and in contrast to a succession of players of the recent past wanting away for their big pay day, Slimani is in no rush to leave Sporting. "Jorge Jesus is a world-class coach – and I'm not exaggerating," the burly striker recently said. "Tactically he's a genius. It's an absolute pleasure to work with him. He makes us progress every day. It was the best decision of my career to sign for Sporting."

With the potent mix of fierce ambition, confidence and sense of entitlement coursing through the club's playing staff, supporters and hierarchy, there is every chance Sporting's woeful start to the new millennium will be followed by something very different.

A good example of the club's newfound self-esteem is the "NOT Sporting Lisbon" campaign, instigated on the social networks and endorsed by the club. In the not-too-distant past Sporting would have been grateful for any mention in the international press, even if erroneously referred to as "Sporting Lisbon". Not so nowadays. The club has embraced the fight to have its name correctly reported, which inherently emphasises its national dimension: Sporting Clube de Portugal. WS

• *Bruno De Carvalho interview, page 64*

Threat...Islam Slimani

Creative...Joao Mario

THE COACH

JORGE JESUS
Age 61 (24.07.54)
The swagger, energy and no little success he installs in teams goes some way to explaining the huge dollops of arrogance that typify each media conference and interview with this charismatic coach.

Convinced he is "the best in the world", Jesus made it to the top of the Portuguese game the hard way, collecting 12 clubs on his managerial CV before finally arriving at Benfica. There, he won the title three times in six seasons (Benfica had won just one in the previous 15 years) and reached two European finals, playing a breathless brand of relentlessly attacking football.

So it shook the domestic game to the core when he walked out on the Eagles for local rivals Sporting last summer. Early signs are that he took his magic with him.

THE KIT

HOME KIT SECOND KIT THIRD KIT

THE SQUAD

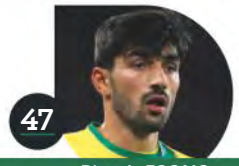
GOALKEEPERS

26 Azbe JUG (Sln)
Age 24 (03.03.92)
Became back-up to Rui Patricio after Marcelo Boeck was sold during the winter transfer window.

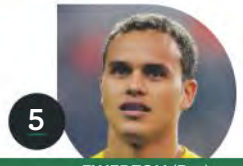
1 RUI PATRICIO
Age 28 (15.02.88)
A superb shot-stopper and psychologically resilient, he has been Portugal's first choice for several years.

DEFENDERS

13 Sebastian COATES (Uru)
Age 25 (07.10.90)
Ex Liverpool and Sunderland central defender, and, at 6ft 4in, the tallest outfield player in Portugal's top flight.



47 Ricardo ESGAIO
Age 22 (16.05.93)
Home-grown talent who can play in either full-back position or as a right-sided midfielder or winger.



5 EWERTON (Bra)
Age 27 (23.03.89)
Beanpole central defender who counts Russian side Anzhi among his former clubs. Has struggled with injuries since signing for Sporting.

4 JEFFERSON (Bra)
Age 27 (05.07.88)
Left-back who likes to bomb forward and deliver pinpoint crosses into the opposition box. Better attacking than defending.

21 JOAO PEREIRA
Age 32 (25.02.84)
Experienced right-back who returned to Sporting after being frozen out at Valencia. Struggled initially but has improved over the season.

44 NALDO (Bra)
Age 27 (28.08.88)
Well-travelled centre-back who was expected to be a back-up but has seen plenty of playing time and let nobody down with his solid displays.

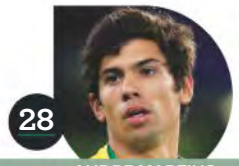
15 PAULO OLIVEIRA
Age 25 (08.01.91)
Solid centre-back who was the boss of the back four until injury stymied his progress after Christmas. Has been linked to Manchester United.

35 RUBEN SEMEDO
Age 21 (04.04.94)
Fast and physical centre-back who can also play in central midfield. A big talent but struggles to keep his discipline.

31 Marvin ZEEGELAAR (Hol)
Age 25 (12.08.90)
Snapped up by Sporting in January after impressing for Rio Ave, the robust full-back has settled in well.

MIDFIELDERS

23 ADRIEN SILVA
Age 27 (15.03.89)
French-born captain who has been at the club since he was 12 and has finally realised his full potential.



28 ANDRE MARTINS
Age 26 (21.01.90)
Diminutive creator who has struggled for playing time this season.

6 Alberto AQUILANI (Ita)
Age 31 (07.07.84)
Full of experience but his appearances have been limited in Sporting's strongest sector.

11 BRUNO CESAR (Bra)
Age 27 (03.11.88)
Former Benfica man who has revived a career that threatened to fade away in the Middle East. Reunited with coach Jorge Jesus at Sporting.

30 BRUNO PAULISTA (Bra)
Age 20 (21.08.95)
Bought for a sizeable fee last summer, the combative Brazilian is seen as a long-term project. Sparsely used in the first team.

17 JOAO MARIO
Age 23 (19.01.93)
Cultured, elegant and creative midfielder who possesses wonderful technique.

14 WILLIAM CARVALHO
Age 23 (07.04.92)
Powerhouse defensive midfielder who has had half of Europe chasing him but has struggled of late.

FORWARDS

29 Hernan BARCOS (ARG)
Age 31 (11.04.84)
Snapped up in the January transfer window to boost Sporting's somewhat scarce striking options.

36 CARLOS MANE
Age 22 (11.03.94)
Gifted and quick, he has not developed as expected after making his debut two years ago, but is still a useful weapon to have on the bench.

60 GELSON MARTINS
Age 20 (11.05.95)
Electrifying winger who is a handful for opposition defenders thanks to his dribbling and darting runs.

19 Teo GUTIERREZ (Col)
Age 30 (17.05.85)
No doubting his ability, but a questionable attitude means the local jury is still out.

73 MATHEUS PEREIRA (Bra)
Age 19 (05.05.96)
An exciting winger who has a fine left foot and has notched several goals despite limited first-team opportunities.

20 Bryan RUIZ (CR)
Age 30 (18.08.85)
The former Fulham man has exceeded expectations and is a key cog in Sporting's attacking play with the skill, creativity and vision to unlock the opposition.

9 Islam SLIMANI (Alg)
Age 27 (18.06.88)
Powerful and strong in the air. he has improved year on year since signing in 2013. Sporting turned down big-money bids for him in January.

(All ages as of 25.03.16)

Facetoface BRUNO DE CARVALHO (CLUB PRESIDENT)

"Football is losing its values"

Sporting dominated in the 1940s and 1950s, Benfica the 1960s and 1970s, Porto since then. Porto's empire seems to be crumbling. Do you think a new power shift is occurring in Portuguese football?
Unfortunately, what you say is true. Sporting had very big teams until the mid sixties. We won seven championships in 10 years, then there was a change and the change was called Eusebio. Porto became very strong in the eighties and remained strong until six or seven years ago. Now we are trying to get Sporting back to the leadership of Portuguese football. And we want to be seen again as a winning team in Europe. But we have to take it step by step, and keep our feet on the ground, and keep focused. It's not easy. It's a long time since Sporting were at the top. We're talking about 50 or 60 years. We believe it's possible to start a new era, and that Sporting can again be what my grandfather and my father taught me Sporting were. They were nicknamed "*Cronico*" because they were chronic winners. It's my goal as Sporting president to make the club like that again.

> "We're trying to get Sporting back to the leadership of Portuguese football. And we want to be seen again as a winning team in Europe"

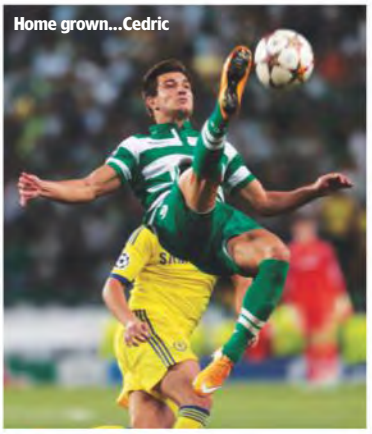
You say Sporting want to regain their competitiveness at European level, but given the financial disparity between Portuguese football and, for example, Spanish, English and German football, is that realistic?
As I said, we need to go step by step. It is a reality that the gap between the leagues is huge, but we also know that Sporting has something unique, which needs to be worked on, and a lot of people don't know this. Sporting has more than 400 delegations all over the world. We are not talking about philosophical groups or some fans who organise a supporters' club in their homes, but physical structures. We're talking about, for example, Sporting Club of Venezuela, Sporting Club of Macao, Sporting Club of Johannesburg, Sporting Club of Toronto, Sporting Club of London, Sporting Club of Paris. We have more than 400 of these structures all over the world. We are in all the continents and have been

for more than 80 years. We are now in the world's top 10 football clubs in terms of members, with 135,000. When you want something bad enough, when you work hard, when you put all your efforts together, nothing is impossible.

Will Sporting's ethos continue to be based on developing and using home-grown players?
Sporting, of course, are known because Luis Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo became the best in the world, but it's not just those two; Cedric was considered the best right-back in England after we sold him to Southampton. We are in the top three clubs as regards players who came through our academy who are now playing in Europe's five major leagues. We are the club that supplies the most players to the Portugal national team. This is our DNA. This is what we do best. To produce players, develop them and maximise their capacity. The second thing that makes people see us as a very different club is that there is a line we refuse to cross. We don't believe in clubs owned by individuals. We believe in clubs owned by the fans. This is a very big difference between Sporting and some other clubs. We believe we can go to 49 per cent in terms of business, but 51 per cent needs to be fans. This is football's strength. A lot of clubs with the dimension of Sporting have a different view. They believe ownership can bring them success. Three years ago, people said that Sporting were three months away from closing its doors. Now we are talking about making Sporting a chronic winner.

It's interesting that Sporting have this two-pronged approach to raising their global profile...
We are speaking about two different things, but we try to make sure the delegations have a connection to the academies because you only gain something if you create synergies between all the parties. What we see now in our delegations is unique. You look into their eyes and you see pride, because they have been going for 80 years. One thing I think people don't realise is that football is losing its values. We have a very hypocritical situation in football. Very important people in the game have said to me: "There is nothing else in the world that can make a blue-eyed blond-haired boy look to a black man and say 'this is my idol'." I say to people that is all well and good, very philosophical, very nice, but let's stop a while and try to understand what happens. What I want is for the child to look at the player and say: "I want to be like him because he has values, he works hard, he showed me that in life you have to work very hard, you need to fight for the goals without stopping, my ultimate ambition is to be the best of the best." But this isn't what happens. The problem is the child looks to the player and says: "He's my idol because he didn't go to school, he has all the girls he wants, he has money, he doesn't do anything, he just plays football. I want that. I want a good life and lots of money." This is not what football needs to provide for children. You need to be able to give the right values. Sporting is well-known in the world since I arrived because we have ideals, we fight for them, we have proposals for changing football. We were the face of the fight against the [third-party ownership] funds, we were the face of introducing new technologies, this is how people need to be in life and in football. They need to have values that people can understand. I don't want to live in a world where when I go to a cafe I hear people saying everybody involved in football is corrupt or bad. I'm 44 years old and I want to leave a mark in football. When I leave I want people to believe that there are good people in football. This is not a problem afflicting only football. *World Soccer* has "global football" on its cover. The lack of principles and values is a global problem. Not only a football problem. It's a society problem. And when you have that problem you have a lot of consequences. When you have a lack of values you have financial crises in countries, you have social crises in countries, and in football you have clubs going bankrupt. We are speaking about billions of people who love this sport, and these billions of people need to receive more than emotion, they need to receive lessons of life, and football has forgotten its social aspect. If you pass the message that you can obtain success through dubious means you don't pass the proper football values, and one day in 10 years, in 100 years, I don't know, football will lose everything.

Team...Carvalho and coach Jorge Jesus


Home grown...Cedric

Like you, Jorge Jesus is a strong personality who is not afraid of saying what he thinks. Do you consider him the perfect coach for your Sporting project?
Yes. Jorge is the consolidation of these three years. Jorge works 24 hours a day, he has ambition, he likes excellence, he sees football as a combination of knowledge, talent and hard work. This is very important for me and for the club. We are unafraid of telling things as they are, we are strong personalities, and we are leaders. We always look for perfection. In life you will never achieve perfection, but at least, even if it's your last breath, your last thought should always be that you tried for perfection. That's why we are a very good combination. People questioned whether it was possible for strong personalities like us to work together. Let me tell you, it's so easy for people who are thinking the same way to work together. We are very good friends and have a single mind, which is merged to get Sporting to where we both want the club to be, which is the leading team in Portuguese football, and then showing the Sporting that Europe used to see.

6 of the best

Emerging stars of Euro 2016

Nick Bidwell highlights those who could impress this summer

1 MARIO GASPAR

SPAIN

Renowned for his searing pace, Villarreal right-back Mario Gaspar Perez has only been a senior international for a few months, but what an impact the 25-year-old from Alicante already has made.

He celebrated his debut for *La Roja* by heading the only goal of the game in October's qualifier in Ukraine and was then on the score sheet the following month, wowing the gallery in his hometown stadium with a stupendous flying volley as England were put to the sword in a friendly.

Preferring attacking spurts inside to overlapping, he is also a highly effective protector of his flank, and as Villarreal coach Marcelino points out, even Liga world-beaters such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar and Gareth Bale invariably struggle to get the better of him.

"If I can help out in attack, so much the better. But my first mission is to defend," says the defender, who is a reported target for Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain.

24

2 DANILO PEREIRA

PORTUGAL

A silver medallist at the 2011 Under-20 World Cup, defensive midfielder Danilo Pereira made his senior debut against Cape Verde last year and kept his place for the team's final three Euro qualifiers.

Born in Portugal's former African colony of Guinea-Bissau, he was raised in Lisbon and began his career at Benfica before playing in Italy (Parma), Greece (Aris) and Holland (Roda JC). He joined Porto from Madeiran outfit, Maritimo last summer and currently has a €40million release clause, reflecting his athleticism, consistency and ability to go on barnstorming forward runs.

3 EDER

ITALY

Brazil-born striker Eder qualified for Italian citizenship through a great-grandfather and scored on his debut for the Nazionale in a 30-minute substitute appearance against Bulgaria. The 29-year-old started in three of Italy's next five games, scoring in the 3-1 win in Azerbaijan and generally impressing with his vitality and good understanding with fellow front man Graziano Pelle.

He owes his nom de plume to his father's admiration for Eder Aleixo do Assis, the Brazilian left-winger who starred in the 1982 World Cup.

4 Laszlo KLEINHEISLER

HUNGARY

Few could have imagined attacking midfielder Laszlo Kleinheisler being a key protagonist as the Magyars booked their ticket for a first European finals since 1972.

Prior to the play-off doubler-header with Norway, the 21-year-old never had been picked for a full squad and was not even playing for his club side, Videoton, after being banished to the reserves over a contract dispute. However, after watching the youngster's performances for Hungary's under-21 side, national coach Bernd Storck threw him in against the Norwegians and he scored the only goal of the first leg.

Left Videoton in January for Werder Bremen.

5 Oleg KUZMIN

RUSSIA

While most 34-year-old professionals give in gracefully to the ageing process and look to ease off the throttle, Rubin Kazan right-back and skipper Oleg Kuzmin is doing exactly the opposite.

The veteran Muscovite is one of a select band of new faces to break into the Russian squad following the federation's decision to replace coach Fabio Capello with CSKA Moscow's Leonid Slutsky last summer. He made his international debut as a late substitute in the vital 1-0 Euro qualifying win over Sweden in September, and scored the opening goal in a 2-0 dismantling of Montenegro a month later in a victory that sealed Russia's place in France.

Now in his sixth season with Rubin, he is very much Slutsky's type of player: wholehearted, tenacious and a tireless worker, relentless in shuttling back and forth. His one weak point, however, is a tendency to collect yellow cards.

6 Marko PJACA

CROATIA

The past 12 months have certainly been full of achievements for gifted Zagreb-born winger Marko Pjaca. Not only did he establish himself on the right side of the Croat attack in the final Euro qualifiers, he also won a domestic double with hometown club Dinamo and was voted both the league's best player of 2014-15 and top youngster.

Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola was particularly effusive in his praise for the 20-year-old after Dinamo lost to the Bavarians in the Champions League earlier this season.

Equally comfortable out wide, as a second striker or as a central playmaker, he is a wonderfully fluid dribbler and boasts an excellent shot.

He's modest too, and is happy to hand all his earnings to his parents with whom he still lives. Dinamo are said to be demanding at least €10million for him. Sounds like a bargain for the next big thing off the red-and-white checked production line.

The Dortmund revivalist

By succeeding Jurgen Klopp, Thomas Tuchel has succeeded where many thought he might fail

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Reformer. Renovator. Revivalist. Only nine months into his reign as Borussia Dortmund coach, Thomas Tuchel is making remarkably light work of what many thought to be an impossible job: that of stepping into the shoes of the iconic Jurgen Klopp.

In the wake of Klopp's shock resignation a year ago and the team's mediocre Bundesliga record last season – at one point they were threatened with relegation before rallying to finish an underwhelming seventh – the Dortmunder were at the end-of-an-era crossroads, shorn of their much-loved leader and crying out for fresh ideas and impetus.

When Tuchel arrived at the Westfalenstadion in July, the widespread assumption was that he would need time to implement his vision. But clearly the 42-year-old ex-Mainz boss had not read the script. His re-energised ▸

BVB
09
EVONIK

team were victorious in their first five Bundesliga games and have since emerged as the only real challengers to Bayern Munich's domestic hegemony.

That Dortmund have managed to keep pace with Bayern in the 2015-16 goalscoring stakes speaks volumes for the firepower that Tuchel has unleashed; and whether it be in the Bundesliga, German Cup or Europa League, their football has often been spellbinding, electrifying, fluid and ruthlessly flamboyant.

His Dortmund exist to dominate and the beauty of his design is that they can achieve this state of grace in so many different ways: through the young midfield passing machine Julian Weigl, the brilliant link-up play of Ilkay Gundogan, wide man extraordinaire Marco Reus, and the goals and creativity of Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

And then there's the current African Player of the Year, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who in the last 18 months, has transformed himself from erratic speedster winger to predatory central striker.

A weapons-grade attack if ever there was one. Not that Tuchel's side are the finished article yet. Defensively they can be vulnerable, conceding twice as many Bundesliga goals as Bayern, while their 5-1 capitulation in Munich in October was a stark reminder of how far they still have to go to match the exploits of the Klopp years: the Bundesliga crown in 2011, the league and cup double the following year, and the runners-up spot in the 2013 Champions League.

Tuchel's reaction to defeat by Bayern said a lot about the man. No excuses, alibis or tribal disappointment, just a heartfelt homage to Bayern and opposite number Pep Guardiola. The message? Where Bayern lead, we should follow.

"Thanks to Jupp Heynckes [Bayern's former coach], Matthias Sammer [the Bavarian club's director of sport] and especially Pep Guardiola, Bayern have left everyone else behind with their emphasis on constantly improving levels of performance," commented Tuchel. "It makes no difference whether Bayern are playing in Mainz, Darmstadt or are at home to Dortmund. They always have the hunger.

"For all their talent, they operate with modesty. They see it as their duty. It's the root of performance sport.

"We want to create the same atmosphere of greatness at Dortmund. We must aim for their cohesiveness, their feeling of invincibility and ability to rise to the occasion. However, as we saw today, we've a gap to make up."

> "The team can get by without me. I'm just trying to help"
>
> Thomas Tuchel

Play days...a youngster with Stuttgarter Kickers

Friendly foes... with Dortmund predecessor Jurgen Klopp (right) while coach of Mainz

There speaks Tuchel the perfectionist. Yet take Bayern out of the equation and Dortmund are in rude health indeed. At this season's winter break they were 23 points better off than at the same point in 2014. And not only have they regained their status as the number two power in the land, they have consolidated it, leaving clubs such as Wolfsburg, Bayer Leverkusen, Schalke and Borussia Monchengladbach trailing in their wake.

Team man...Tuchel embraces Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang after a Bundesliga win over Borussia Monchengladbach

"Our hope was that Thomas Tuchel would make a great impact here with his input and sense of strategy, but he's exceeded all our expectations," declared club general manager Michael Zorc.

"Though I'm not one to resort to superlatives after just a few months, I do believe that in this particular phase, he's the perfect coach for us."

While the focus inevitably is on Tuchel's

ability as a coach, it often goes unreported that he was a fine teenage footballer.

An intelligent and resourceful defender, he twice helped the Augsburg youth team lift the German Cup and in the 1991-92 campaign he was good enough to win three caps for his country's under-19 side.

That, however, was as good as it got. At second division Stuttgarter Kickers he appeared only rarely in the first team and after four seasons in the third-tier Regionalliga with Ulm, he was forced to retire at the age of 24 because of a serious knee injury.

Making a point...Tuchel revitalised Mainz

As the new century dawned, he turned to coaching at VfB Stuttgart, initially taking charge of their under-14s, then assuming responsibility for the under-19s. In 2006 he passed his full coaching licence with the second-highest score of his intake and returned to his old Augsburg stomping ground to do sterling work at their academy. Two years later he was appointed youth-team coach at Mainz and immediately led his side to the national championship.

His big break arrived just four days before the start of the 2009-10 Bundesliga campaign. With Mainz reeling from a first-round German Cup defeat by the minnows of Lubeck, and the air thick with rumours of a mutinous squad, the powers-that-be rang the changes, sacking

TUCHEL'S CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

BACKROOM STAFF

ARNO MICHELS
Assistant coach who has been in alliance with Tuchel since 2009. The pair first struck up a friendship on a DFB coaching course in Cologne almost a decade ago.

BENJAMIN WEBER
Dortmund's head of video analysis, he worked in this field at Mainz for both Jurgen Klopp and Tuchel. A world-class junior tennis player before a shoulder injury scuppered his hopes.

RAINER SCHREY
High-profile fitness and conditioning coach who is renowned for his work with a number of German sports federations. Previously on the payroll at Hoffenheim.

WOLFGANG DE BEER
"Teddy" has spent over 30 years at Dortmund. Had 16 seasons as the team's last line of defence prior to becoming first-team goalkeeping coach early in the new millennium.

INFLUENCES

RALF RANGNICK
The former Stuttgart, Hanover, Schalke and Hoffenheim boss who was Tuchel's coach at south-west amateurs Ulm. As well as being a goldmine of tactical information, he also gave him his first technical-area job, in charge of Stuttgart's under-14s.

HERMANN BADSTUBER
According to Tuchel, no one played a bigger role in his vocational development than his fellow coach at the Stuttgart academy: the late father of Bayern Munich and Germany defender Holger Badstuber.

PEP GUARDIOLA
Tuchel simply idolises his Bayern Munich counterpart. He is never anything less than gushing in his praise for the Catalan's possession-based credo and genius as a tactical problem-solver.

coach Jorn Andersen and replacing him with Tuchel.

It proved to be an inspired decision as the former junior-team boss immediately unified the dressing room and subsequently worked a modern-day footballing miracle, establishing an unfashionable provincial outfit as a top-flight force, assembling an attractive, winning team on a shoestring and twice qualifying them for the Europa League, in 2011 and 2014.

It is no coincidence that, in the last decade-and-a-half, Mainz have launched the stellar coaching careers of both Klopp and Tuchel. For long-serving general manager Christian Heidel – who is due to leave this summer for Schalke – promoting talented leaders from within makes perfect sense. "The idea of experience is overrated," says Heidel. "We've often kept faith with inexperienced guys already working for us. Expertise and character are more important. After all, the size of a pitch for a youth game is exactly the same as for the seniors."

One game from the end of the 2013-14 season, a full 12 months before his contract was due to expire, Tuchel announced the end of the affair with Mainz. Club president Harald Strutz was convinced his coach could have behaved in a less high-handed way, calling the manner of his departure "borderline", yet ultimately he could do nothing about it.

Unable to take another job without Mainz's approval, Tuchel would have to take a year-long sabbatical, and after a string of flattering if not irresistible job offers from Schalke, Hamburg, Stuttgart and RB Leipzig, he was finally wooed by the prospect of running the post-Klopp show at Dortmund.

That Tuchel has settled in so well, so quickly at Dortmund, is mainly because he has not started from scratch. Rather than ripping up the entire Klopp playbook and forging a completely new playing identity at the Ruhr outfit, he has simply set about building on his predecessor's legacy.

Message...Tuchel gets his point across to his Mainz team

While far from renouncing the Klopp commandments – the aggressive pressing, supersonic transitions, power, pace and vibrancy – the Tuchel approach is much more refined and structured. "Kloppball" often was wild and uncontrollable. Tuchel, though, insists on a 50-50 mix of brain and heart.

Without the ball, the Dortmund class of 2015-16 can either relentlessly squeeze or sit off and, for the new man in charge, possession is all important. Whereas Klopp's charges invariably went straight for the jugular, Tuchel preaches patient probing and control, precisely circulating the ball while waiting for holes to open up – then flooding in for the kill.

> "Our hope was that Thomas Tuchel would make a great impact here with his input and sense of strategy, but he's exceeded all our expectations"
>
> **Dortmund general manager Michael Zorc**

To Tuchel's immense credit a Dortmunder on the ball always has multiple options, and in their ability to conjure numerical overloads they are absolutely stunning.

Unsurprisingly for a coach who sees Guardiola as the fount of all knowledge, Tuchel also prides himself on his tactical flexibility. A most astute game analyst and swift to respond to opposition power plays, the Dortmund boss usually goes with a

4-2-3-1 formation, but has all manner of shape-shifting back-up plans to call on: perhaps a 4-3-3, maybe a 4-1-4-1 or even the 5-3-2 he recently used in the goalless draw at home to Bayern in the Bundesliga.

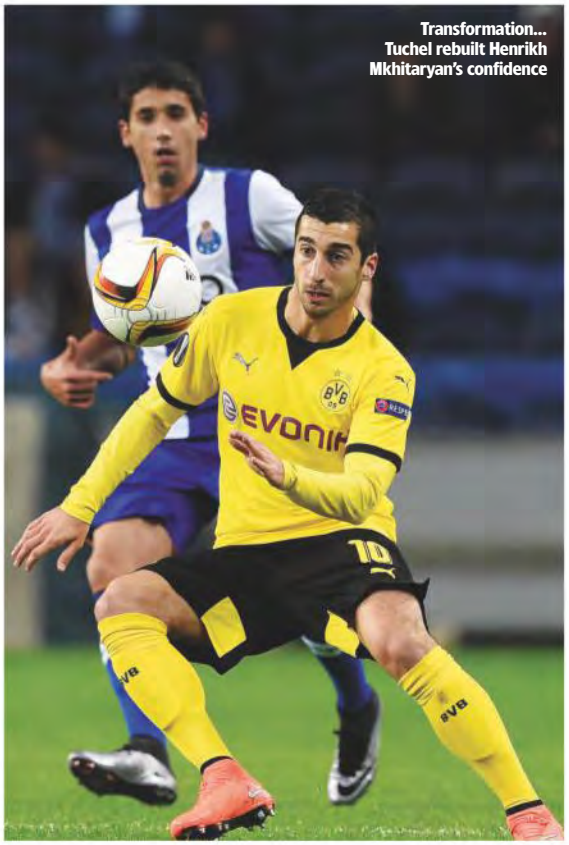
No team of Tuchel's is ever under-prepared or poorly rehearsed. Some play 3D chess; TT attempts the same on turf.

After five years of overachievement at Mainz with a group of middling professional and up-and-coming youngsters, Tuchel has proved equally shrewd in his new role as a man-manager of star names. High-maintenance professionals need to be handled with care and it says much for Tuchel's powers of persuasion that everyone in the *Schwarz-Gelben* dressing room immediately bought into his message.

Players who sense their coach is a winner only rarely fail to jump on board. So much the better if he also is a superb training-ground teacher, a specialist in bringing about individual and collective improvement.

Occasional bouts of self-effacement are a useful motivational tool as well and he has said: "I can't win a game on my own. The team can get by without me.

"I'm just trying to help. To identify things, to establish basics or to get the guys on the pitch to come together. Ultimately, my task is to engage with all the needs of the players. The stadium is the stage of the players."



Transformation... Tuchel rebuilt Henrikh Mkhitaryan's confidence

His interpersonal skills were especially apparent in his successful efforts to revitalise Armenian wide playmaker Mkhitaryan who, after a disastrous campaign in 2014-15, was on the verge of quitting the club.

Convinced that "Miki" had the talent to become the heartbeat of his side, Tuchel made it a pre-season priority to boost the former Shakhtar Donetsk star's morale. What a good job he made of it too, with the player coming good in a blaze of assists and goals this term.

"The coach played a huge part in my comeback," says Mkhitaryan, who has been linked with Juventus. "He spoke to me a lot. He understood what he had to do to make things better for me. To get me to grasp the psychological fundamentals. If I missed a good chance, I used to take it so badly that I wouldn't sleep that night. Now, I've learnt to savour my performances."

Tuchel once likened his technical area vocation to that of a "contractor" – which is a most inappropriate description for one of Europe's brightest and best young football thinkers. **WS**

Leader...Dortmund fans show their support for the coach

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Talentscout

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Andreas CHRISTENSEN

Defender, 19 (10.04.96), Borussia Monchengladbach (Ger, on loan from Chelsea, Eng) & Denmark

In a sentence
Wonderfully precocious teenager who, since leaving Chelsea last summer for a two-season loan stint with Borussia Monchengladbach, has not only emerged as one of the best centre-backs in the Bundesliga but also looked the part on Champions League battlegrounds.

What they say
Peter Bonde, former Denmark assistant coach: "Andreas easily could have played for Chelsea this season. It is simply fanciful to suggest he could not survive in the Premier League. My only fear for his future is that some look at Chelsea sending him on loan and imagine it to be rejection."

Andre Schubert, Gladbach coach: "He plays with a coolness which is very impressive indeed. He has the aura of an experienced campaigner. He stays unperturbed and usually makes the right decisions."

> "Andreas easily could have played for Chelsea this season"
> Peter Bonde, ex-assistant national coach

The story so far
The son of former Brondby goalkeeper Steen Christensen, Andreas naturally gravitated to the same Copenhagen outfit, spending eight years there as a schoolboy and junior before developing into a national footballing phenomenon – so much so that several elite European clubs were queuing around the block for his signature. Early in 2012, aged just 15, he signed on the dotted line for Chelsea, going on to feature in their under-18 and under-21 sides and making his professional debut in a League Cup tie against Shrewsbury Town in October 2014. Later that season he would appear twice more for the first team – once in the FA Cup, once in the Premier League – but as is the Chelsea way, he was then duly sent on loan to Borussia Monchengladbach. He has represented Denmark in every age category, performing especially ably for the under-21s and making his senior bow in a friendly with Montenegro in June 2015.

The next step
Gladbach director of sport Max Eberl makes no secret of his desire to bring the youngster on board permanently and rumours are circulating in Germany that he is prepared to pay up to €15million to swing the deal. But will Chelsea play ball? With John Terry approaching the end of the line and Kurt Zouma out with a long-term knee injury, the west Londoners desperately need new central defensive faces and could well see the Dane as the answer to their prayers.

Strengths
Strong in the air, gutsy and mobile, he is technically good and rarely hits duff notes with his distribution. Extremely versatile, he is comfortable as a stopper, midfield holder or at right-back.

Weaknesses
He has yet to fully mature physically. At the moment he is a little too light for the super-heavyweight division.

3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CHRISTENSEN

- Prior to moving to Gladbach, he played with Chelsea team-mate Eden Hazard, whose younger brother, Thorgan, plays for the German club.
- While still at school, he was extensively scouted by the likes of Manchester City, Arsenal and Bayern Munich.
- In his adolescent days at Brondby, he mainly played as a striker, proving himself quite a fearsome finisher.

Lucas ANDERSEN

Age 21 (13.09.94), Willem II (Hol, on loan from Ajax, Hol) & Denmark
After falling out of favour with Ajax boss Frank De Boer and being loaned out this term, the left-winger has been fighting back with a vengeance, proving himself one of the most elegant and skilful players in the whole of the Eredivisie.

Oscar LEWICKI

Age 23 (14.07.92), Malmo & Sweden
Hyperactive, combative and tactically astute defensive midfielder who was an ever-present in Sweden's triumph in last year's European Under-21 finals before going on to claim a regular spot in the senior national team. Played for Bayern Munich's youth team and reserves, but returned to Sweden in 2011.

Arnor Ingvi TRAUSTASON

Age 22 (30.04.93), Norrkoping (Swe) & Iceland
A key contributor to Norrkoping's march to the 2015 Swedish league title, scoring seven goals and making a further 11, he loves being in the thick of the attacking action. A right-footer on the left flank, he won his first senior cap in a friendly versus Poland last year.

Martin BRAITHWAITE

Age 24 (05.06.91), Toulouse (Fra) & Denmark
Irrepressible front runner, who can make life difficult for any rearguard with his speed, dancing feet and unpredictability. The son of a Danish mother and a father from Guyana, he also takes a mean free-kick, scoring a beauty against Saint-Etienne in the first game of the season.

Linus WAHLQVIST

Age 19 (11.11.96), Norrkoping & Sweden
One of Norrkoping's table-topping heroes, the resourceful right-back cut a mature figure all campaign and is rumoured to be on the watch-list of Arsenal, Sunderland and Benfica. Not that he is likely to be emigrating just yet. Norrkoping is the quarter of Stockholm he was born in and he has his eye on a Champions League campaign. A recent international debutant.

Ole SELNAES

Age 21 (07.07.94), Saint-Etienne (Fra) & Norway
Voted the Norwegian league's player of the year with Rosenborg, the midfield holder cum left-footed link man has just embarked on the next leg of his journey, sealing a switch to Ligue 1. His father, Ivar Selnaes, was a reserve goalkeeper for Rosenborg.

Markus HENRIKSEN

Age 23 (25.07.92), AZ (Hol) & Norway
In his fourth season with AZ – who he joined from Rosenborg – the attacking midfielder is firing on all cylinders, piling up the goals in both the Eredivisie and Europa League. His box-to-box drive, technical finery and emphatic finishing, are absolutely indispensable to AZ and if Italian sources are correct, Napoli are set to swoop in the summer.

Arber ZENELI

Age 21 (25.02.95), Heerenveen (Hol) & Sweden
Heerenveen pulled off a coup in January with the €1.95m signing of Elfsborg's supremely gifted right-winger. Swedish-born of Kosovan descent, he apparently is being courted by the Albanian federation.

World Soccer vintage 52 years ago

April 1964

Highly respected coaching pair call it a day

In this issue of *World Soccer*, Eric Batty reported on the end of an era for two of the game's most respected coaches. He commented: "Sepp Herberger finally announced his intention to quit international football, and more specifically his job as selector, trainer and manager of the West German national team.

"His resignation was no surprise for, before the World Cup in Chile, he had declared that this would be his last tilt at the game's top honour.

"And if the new boss was to consolidate his position and establish a new team ready for 1966, it was clear that 'Uncle Sepp' could not hang on too long.

"This left Switzerland boss Karl Rappan, the only long-serving manager in the international arena.

"But hardly had the Herberger headlines dried before Rappan also handed in his resignation."

Batty continued: "Without doubt, Herberger and Rappan were the grand old men of international soccer, the only bosses with managerial experience of the thirties which, as time goes by, is becoming more and more widely accepted as the golden age of soccer.

"That they should go together is perhaps fitting, but their departure marks with indelible clarity the unmistakable end of an era."

Karl Rappan, according to Batty, was the most interesting of the two men.

Born in Austria and a member of the "*Wunderteam*" in his playing days, he had four stints as manager of Switzerland's national side, first leading them in the 1938 World Cup and then again from 1942 to 1949.

In 1953 he was recalled once more, a year before the Swiss hosted the tournament, when they lost in the quarter-finals, surrendering a 3-0 lead to Austria and eventually going down 7-5.

Batty wrote: "Again Rappan bowed out, but for the fourth time he came back in 1960 to attempt the impossible: to steer Switzerland through to Chile [1962 World Cup].

"They needed a play-off in Berlin to overcome Sweden [in the qualifiers], and though they lost all three games they played in Chile, it was a miracle that they qualified at all.

"Since then Rappan has tried without success to rebuild the Swiss team with younger players. Their record was dismal [played 12, drawn two, lost 10]. Rappan's last outing was in Paris where his team drew 2-2 with a mediocre French team. Seven days later he sent his resignation to the Swiss FA."

Batty considered both men's tenures as "a labour of love", explaining: "Since deciding to retire, both Rappan and Herberger have had offers from wealthy Italian clubs who were obviously impressed by their fine records, but both men turned them down.

"With talented players at their disposal, and cash enough to buy others they could both have been successful – but I don't think they would have enjoyed it." WS

Cover...Scotland players celebrate beating England at Wembley in 1963

All over...Eric Batty's report

FOURTEEN — WORLD SOCCER, April, 1964

SEPP AND KARL — THE LAST OF THE GREAT BOSSES

ERIC BATTY outlines the effect of a departure from the active soccer scene

AT the end of 1963, Sepp Herberger finally announced his intention to quit international football, and more specifically his job as selector, trainer, manager of the West German national team. His resignation was no surprise for before the last World Cup in Chile he had declared that this would be his last tilt at the game's top honour, and if the new boss was to consolidate his position and establish a new team ready for the 1966 series, it was clear that Uncle Sepp could not hang on too long.

With Walter Winterbottom giving up his England job immediately after the Chile series this left Switzerland's soccer boss Karl Rappan, the only long serving manager in the international arena, but hardly had the Herberger headlines dried before Rappan also handed in his resignation.

Herberger's retreat was expected, and in May he hands over full control to the man he recommended to the D.F.B., 48-year-old Helmut Schon who has been his right hand man for the last five years, but in Switzerland Rappan's decision stirred up a flurry of comment and criticism that still hasn't settled.

Without doubt, Herberger and Rappan were the grand old men of international soccer, the only bosses with managerial experience of the thirties which as time goes by is becoming more and more widely accepted as the golden age of soccer. That they should go together is perhaps fitting, but their departure at the end of the current season marks with indelible clarity the unmistakeable end of an era.

Distinction

To illustrate the points I want to make in this article, Karl Rappan is the most interesting of the two, for he has served both club and country over many years, with great distinction, while the greater part of Sepp Herberger's post playing life has been devoted to the interests of the German F.A. Born in Austria, Rappan's association with football began in Vienna where he played for Wacker, Austria and Rapid before joining the Geneva club Servette in the 1930s. A full-back, he was capped four times, and earned a host of minor honours at a time when Austrian football was rated the best in Europe, and their "Wunderteam" was all but untouchable. With Servette, he became first player-coach, and later coach; led them to two championship successes and embarked on a managerial career that was to span almost thirty years and establish Karl Rappan as one of the game's outstanding personalities.

From Geneva, Rappan moved to Zurich and the famous Grasshoppers Club which under his guidance experienced the most successful twelve years in their history. Seven times they won the Swiss Cup; five times they won the league and in three of those highly profitable years Grasshoppers did the double.

Later Rappan returned to Servette where he added another championship and another Cup win to his tally, but despite this remarkable record his greatest services to Swiss football were dotted in between these domestic jobs—his terms as boss, and often the saviour of the national team.

Rappan's first success in the international arena came in the 1938 World Cup. A year earlier, he'd been given the task of preparing the Swiss squad, and a fortnight before the World Cup opened in Paris, Switzerland met England in Zurich. The English at that time were F.I.F.A. outlaws, and though not eligible for the series, were still reckoned to be the world's top team. In Zurich however England were beaten 2-1, and the Swiss went on to Paris and beat Greater Germany (Germany and Austria) 4-2 after a replay, and reached the semi-final.

After the World Cup, Rappan resigned, but came back in 1942 to stay on for seven years, and then in 1953 he was recalled once more to save the honour of the Swiss who were staging the 1954 World series. As host country, Switzerland reached the last sixteen automatically, but they had been faring so poorly that they were almost written off before the series began. With West Germany, Brazil, Uruguay and Austria all fielding fine teams and the great Hungarians thrown in, it was illogical to expect the Swiss to repeat their 1938 performance, but they achieved their "maximum" by beating the Italians twice 2-1 and 4-1 to reach the quarter finals.

Again Rappan bowed out, returning to Servette for the 1954-55 campaign but for the fourth time he came back in 1960 to attempt the impossible—to steer Switzerland through to Chile. Linked in the qualifying round with Sweden, beaten finalists in 1958 and Belgium who were clearly on the upgrade, it seemed impossible for the Swiss to get through. They needed a play-off in Berlin to overcome Sweden, and though they lost all three games they played in Chile, it was a miracle that they qualified at all.

Dismal

Since then Rappan has tried without success to rebuild the Swiss team with younger players. Their record was dismal —in 1962 played seven, lost seven; in 1963 played five, drawn two, lost three. Rappan's last outing was in Paris where his team drew 2-2 against a mediocre French team, and after the match told journalists that he was quite pleased.

Seven days later he sent his resignation to the Swiss F.A.

Rappan's contract doesn't expire until the end of the season, and lacking a ready made successor, the F.A. asked him to stay on until May. His three aides—Roger Bocquet, Willi Neukomm and Roger Quinche have made it plain that they don't want the job, and agreed to remain in office only if Rappan stayed.

Why Rappan quit is not exactly clear,

Members of the West German 1954 World Cup winning party bounce "Uncle Sepp" on a rather outsize looking ball, but not to give him any inflated sense of his own importance! (O.)

> **"Without doubt, Herberger and Rappan were the grand old men of international soccer"**

WORLD SOCCER, April, 1964 — *FIFTEEN*

though he himself has said that the clubs (the big clubs) are not prepared to release their players for training, and this makes his task impossible. "It used to be a great honour," he said, "to play for l'equipe Suisse—now Servette, Zurich and Basel came first."

This criticism is probably aimed at club officials more than the players though a strong section of the Swiss experts feel that it was the attitude of the players who forced Rappan to quit. "Rappan has lost his halo" said one critic. "The young players have been intimidated by him, but never won over." If this is true—and it may well be, then we are about to take another huge step away from the days when the players were indisputable kings and watching a top class football match was a warm and human experience.

It's not for the good of the game, but where the players once feinted and twisted for applause from the terraces, they are now grimly dedicated to carrying out the orders of the man who sits on the trainer's bench.

To satisfy the "modern" boss, the frills have to be eliminated and the pattern of the game reduced to basic essentials. Clearly explaining everyone's duties the coach leaves little or nothing to the initiative of the individual, planning each game like a set-piece naval battle. Tactics are vital, position is the essence of the game.

This is the direction in which the "modern football club" is moving, and it wouldn't be unnatural for the players to feel lost and out of touch with an international boss who meets them only rarely and asks for initiative when it is being systematically choked out of league football.

Puppets

Today the manager is king, and the players are no more responsible for their actions than puppets dancing on the end of a string. The manager draws up his blueprint, and drills his men to the pattern he intends to impose on the game, and significantly he doesn't ask a player to change his role. Should he feel that the team needs reinforcing in midfield he'll pull back a winger or an inside-forward but he won't ask the usual winger to do it. The winger will be dropped and replaced by a wing-half who will be told to play his natural game.

Success or failure depend almost entirely on the manager. He alone is the real star in the side for the players are merely carrying out his orders, and if his team should lose he can explain how and why it happened quite briefly. With the emphasis on defence among the top teams, the cause for any defeat is almost certain to be found in a break-down of the defensive system, and sitting on the trainer's bench the boss can spot the faults unerringly. After the match the points raised during the inquest are understood by all — "A" allowed himself to be drawn out of position, "B" failed to tackle quickly enough, "C" was slow to cover.

The players, understand, agree and accept, and the whole performance will be gone over in training the following week—but the old-fashioned soccer boss gets himself involved in a vague and almost unreal world when he begins to talk of "good football." The recent experiences of Argentina's Humberto Maschio illustrate my point for last summer he was transferred from Internazionale (Italian champions) to the more modest Fiorentina. Inter, he said, are a machine—geared to win, and it's just great playing with Fiorentina. They are a football team.

Training players the Swiss way at Zurich. The departure of Karl Rappan from the scene of soccer activity has been a great blow to the sport. Trainer Louis Maurer holds the ball for Klaus Stuermer to head. (Metelmann.)

Decisions

To take my theme a step further, consider the work of an imaginative architect whose idea of a super stadium for the year 2000 was published on the continent at about the same time that Herberger and Rappan announced their decisions to bow out. The emphasis everywhere was on science—a huge bowl with 150,000 seats covered completely by a plastic oval-shaped dome which could be moved at will by electronics. Beneath it all an underground mono-rail station ensured the smooth arrival of the spectators, and gadgets were to be found everywhere.

Forty years from now it appears we won't have linesmen whose duties will have been taken over by radar, and when the ball goes out of play it will be signalled on a control panel spread before the "referee" who will be seated among the spectators.

Groundsmen too will have been dispensed with, for the turf which causes so many headaches now will be replaced by a factory-produced compound combining all the good qualities to be found in grass but none of its drawbacks.

Problem

With all these advantages promised for the future, there remains only one problem —will the game itself retain its universal popularity?

Personally I rather doubt it, for all these technological advantages would demand enormous sums of money which can only be raised by higher admission charges—and this at a time when public interest appears to be declining everywhere.

It may well prove impossible to halt the march of progress and there is little sign in the game itself that the scientific age isn't welcome. Coaches now are analysing the play of the top teams—counting the number of short and long passes in an attempt to find the formula for success. Having found it the modern scientific trainer offers his findings to the players, and together they develop the system, the method, the plan—scientific football, which would not be out of place in the 21st century stadia the architects will soon be wanting us to build.

Approach

Here and there dissenting voices can already be heard as the game begins to be dominated by the scientific approach. Maschio's was one—Real Madrid President Santiago Bernabeu is another with his references to "anti-futbol" and I believe that thousands of others could have made the point if they'd been asked before they joined the group that has become known as the "missing millions."

Overall, I don't believe that scientific football will ever recapture the mass popularity of old-fashioned football for essentially it was an art and not a science. Like it or not it was the individualists, the artists, the cheeky little fellows who were dubbed "personalities" that drew in the crowds and there's no place for them in the disciplined approach of the modern managers, whose aim is not good football but good results.

Leading the modern managers by a considerable margin is Helenio Herrera the boss of Inter, and as different from Sepp Herberger and Karl Rappan as chalk is from cheese. Herrera's income variously estimated to be from £500 to £1,000 a week is certainly the highest salary ever paid to any manager and far more than Herberger or Rappan ever earned, but I feel sure they don't envy him. In their day, to work in football was a labour of love.

Since deciding to retire both Rappan and Herberger have had offers from wealthy Italian clubs who were obviously impressed by their fine records, but both men turned them down. With talented players at their disposal, and cash enough to buy others they could both have been successful—but I don't think they would have enjoyed it.

Also in this issue...

p8 A monthly round-up from the Republic of Ireland featured a picture of the three Maloney brothers of non-league side Glasheen, who had qualified for the first round of the FAI Cup, where they played Drogheda United. John, Ollie and Billy all had plenty of past cup experience, with John and Billy becoming the first brothers to play against each other in the Final, when John's Cork Athletic beat Billy's Evergreen United 2-1 in a replay in 1953.

p25 Jerry Weinstein reported on the shocks in the fifth round of the French Cup, writing: "The three last cup winners – Sedan, Saint-Etienne and Monaco – are all out. League leaders Saint-Etienne were the major surprise for they were defeated by Valenciennes, whom they had beaten a fortnight previously in a league match, playing with only 10 men for four-fifths of the game."

p19 Bernard Moser told of Lucien Muller's decision to leave Reims for Real Madrid, following in the footsteps of the famous Raymond Kopa who had made the same journey three years earlier, but hadn't been happy. "He [Muller] talked it over with him [Kopa] and thought about it – but not for long," revealed Moser. "Muller signed, got married and moved to Madrid within a month."

p20-21 In the European Cup quarter-finals, Real Madrid beat Milan 4-1 in the first leg, but were pushed all the way in the return, which Milan won 2-0. "Milan surged forward, and wave upon wave of coloured shirts splashed against the white wall of Real defenders," reported Roger MacDonald. "It seemed incredible that Madrid were not overwhelmed, but somehow they survived a remarkable onslaught."

10 years ago

Tajikistan won an international tournament for the first time, 12 years after being admitted to FIFA, beating Sri Lanka 4-0 in the AFC Challenge Cup Final. In Europe, Guus Hiddink led PSV to a third Eredivisie in four seasons since returning to Eindhoven in 2002.

20 years ago

Nimes became the first club from the third tier to reach the French Cup Final after they beat Montpellier 1-0 in the semi-finals. Meanwhile in Brazil, only 22 fans turned up to watch Fluminense beat Volta Redonda in a Rio de Janeiro state championship match.

30 years ago

Spanish football was celebrating a fine continental treble as Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid all reached finals – in the European Cup, European Cup-winners Cup and UEFA Cup respectively. Barca came from 3-0 down to Gothenburg before winning on penalties.

40 years ago

A record attendance for a football match in the United States was set when 58,120 fans attended an exhibition match between Seattle Sounders and New York Cosmos in the King County Domed Stadium in Seattle. A Pele-inspired Cosmos won 3-1.

50 years ago

Three British clubs reached the last four of the European Cup-winners Cup. Holders West Ham United lost 5-2 on aggregate to Borussia Dortmund in their semi, while Celtic missed the chance to play in the Glasgow Final as they lost 2-1 to Liverpool on aggregate.

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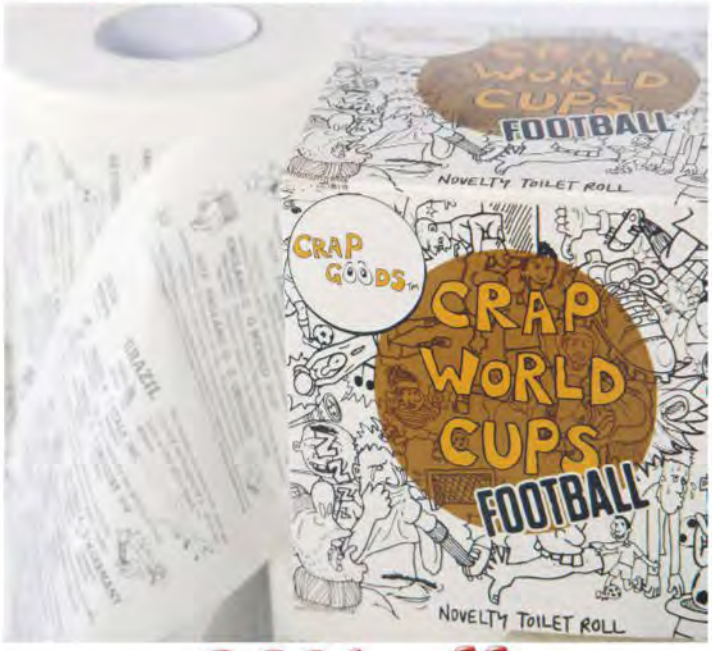

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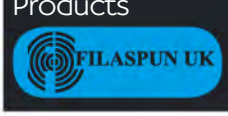

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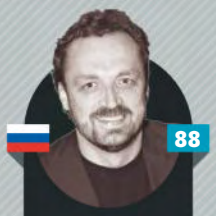
86

BRYAN KAY
Cuba



88

VICTOR GUSEV
Russia

HOWARD JOHNSON
France

85

OLUWASHINA OKELEJI
Nigeria

90

PLUS

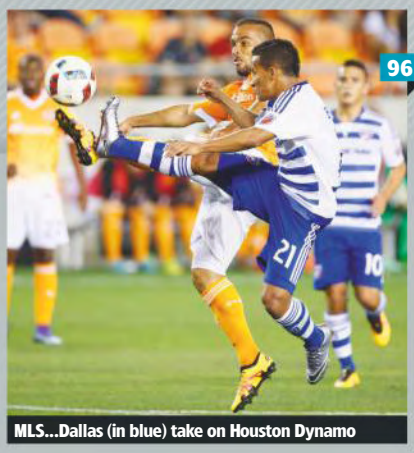
94

Joint-top... Cristiano Ronaldo

DIARY
84 Comprehensive global news

CLUB FOOTBALL
92 ESM XI
94 ESM Golden Shoe
95 Results, tables, fixtures

SQUADS
96 USA: MLS



96

MLS...Dallas (in blue) take on Houston Dynamo

FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 17 2016

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Debutant... Atletico Mineiro's Robinho (right)

Friday February 19

ITALY: Juventus' run of 15 Serie A victories in a row comes to an end with a goalless draw at Bologna.

Saturday February 20

DR CONGO: TP Mazembe win the CAF Super Cup for a third time, beating Tunisia's Etoile du Sahel 2-1 with two goals from Daniel Nii Adjei.
FRANCE: At the age of 17 years and 62 days, Kylian Mbappe scores in Monaco's 3-1 win against Troyes and replaces Thierry Henry as the club's youngest ever goalscorer.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich fail to set a club record of six successive clean sheets at home in all competitions as Darmstadt take a half-time lead at the Allianz-Arena. The hosts recover to win 3-1.

Sunday February 21

CHINA: Australia's Tim Cahill signs a five-month deal with Hangzhou Greentown a week after Shanghai Shenhua terminated his contract.
COPA AMERICA: In the draw for this summer's tournament, holders Chile are paired in the same group as Argentina, the side they beat on penalties in last year's Final.
GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund's 1-0 win at Bayer Leverkusen is suspended for eight minutes as ref Felix Zwayer takes the players off the pitch when the hosts' coach, Roger Schmidt, refuses to be sent off after protesting at Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's winning goal.
HOLLAND: Police arrest 326 fans during a demonstration against the club's management by Feyenoord supporters at De Kuip stadium before a 1-1 draw with Roda.
SPAIN: Thirteen players are booked in a bad-tempered Basque derby as Real Sociedad beat Athletic Bilbao 1-0 at San Mames.
TURKEY: Trabzonspor have four players sent off as they lose 2-1 at Galatasaray, including Salih Dursun who is dismissed for brandishing a red card at referee Deniz Ates Bitnel after the official had dropped it.

Monday February 22

ENGLAND: Manchester United ease the pressure on manager Louis Van Gaal by beating third-tier strugglers Shrewsbury Town 3-0 in the FA Cup.
ITALY: Napoli are held 1-1 at home by Milan and miss the chance to return to the top of Serie A.

Tuesday February 23

CHINA: New signings Alex Teixeira, Ramires and Jo make their debuts for Jiangsu Suning in a 1-1 draw with Binh Duong of Vietnam in the AFC Champions League.
ITALY: Juventus come back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at home to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.
SOUTH KOREA: Adriano scores four goals in just over half an hour as Seoul win 6-0 away to Buriram United of Thailand in the group stage of the AFC Champions League.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores against ex-Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech for the first time in six games as Barcelona win 2-0 at Arsenal in the first leg of their Champions League round of 16 tie.
USA: Seattle Sounders draw 2-2 with holders America of Mexico in the CONCACAF Champions League quarter-final first leg. DC United lose 2-0 away to Queretaro.

Wednesday February 24

ENGLAND: Manchester City win 3-1 away to Dynamo Kiev in their Champions League round of 16 tie.
GERMANY: Bayer Leverkusen coach Roger Schmidt is given a five-game stadium ban for arguing with the referee during Sunday's defeat by Borussia Dortmund.
HOLLAND: PSV hold on for a goalless draw at home to Atletico Madrid in the Champions League after Gaston Pereiro is sent off in the 68th minute.
MALAYSIA: Safiq Rahim scores a hat-trick as Johor Darul Ta'zim begin their defence of the AFC Cup with an 8-1 victory over Myanmar's Ayeyawady United.
PORTUGAL: Braga are the first team to book their place in the last 16 of the Europa League as a 2-2 draw at home to Sion gives them a 4-3 aggregate victory.

Thursday February 25

BRAZIL: Robinho comes off the bench and makes his debut for Atletico Mineiro in their 1-0 Libertadores Cup win against Independiente del Valle of Ecuador.
ENGLAND: Two goals from debutant Marcus Rashford give Manchester United a 5-1 win against Midtjylland in the Europa League.
SPAIN: Valencia beat Rapid Vienna 4-0 to chalk up a record-breaking Europa League aggregate score of ➤

Pressure...Seattle Sounders' Jordan Morris (no13) and Brad Evans threaten America's goal in the CONCACAF Champions League

France

HOWARD JOHNSON

Benzema set for *Les Bleus* return

Court of appeal allows striker to play for the national team

Controversy...Karim Benzema became embroiled in an alleged "sex tape" blackmail plot

The chances of France's main striker Karim Benzema playing on home soil at this summer's Euro finals improved considerably after a court of appeal at Versailles lifted a ban on the 28-year-old having any contact with his international team-mate Mathieu Valbuena.

In November last year a judge ruled there should be absolutely no interaction between the two after Benzema became implicated in an attempted "sex tape" blackmailing of Valbuena. The Real Madrid forward was held by police overnight before being officially placed under investigation for "complicity in an attempt to blackmail, and of criminal association with persons preparing to commit an offence, punishable by a prison sentence of at least five years".

In June last year, Valbuena started receiving phone calls demanding €100,000 in return for not putting a video into the public domain. According to reports, it featured the Lyon midfielder having sex with his girlfriend.

The player immediately went to the police and the names of three potential suspects quickly came to the fore – one of whom knows a number of top footballers and allegedly stole the video from one of Valbuena's old mobiles. Police wiretaps were put in place, and six conversations were recorded between June and October. According to newspaper *Le Parisien,* Valbuena and Benzema discussed the tape when the France squad met up at Clairfontaine on October 5, before games against Armenia and Denmark.

Police then questioned a fourth man, Karim Zenati, a childhood friend of Benzema and who had previously served time for armed robbery. The suspicion was Zenati knew the blackmailers and had been told by them to use his friendship with Benzema to put pressure on Valbuena.

The plot thickened on November 10 when radio station Europe 1 claimed it had a transcript of a phone call between Benzema and Zenati, in which Benzema told his friend he didn't think Valbuena was taking them seriously; that he'd told Valbuena he'd "sort things out"; and that he "saw the video last week". Benzema said he told Valbuena that Zenati would deal with things, because "he knows the person who's got your video. Give me your number, I'll give it to him and then you sort it out with him".

> "Football-wise it's not the same without Karim. The goal for the Euros is to have the best team, and for that you need the best players"
>
> France coach Didier Deschamps

Moral high ground...federation president Noel Le Graet

Benzema's lawyer denied his client had played any part in any blackmail and the player immediately sued the radio station, claiming it was all a misunderstanding, he had never seen the tape, and he just wanted to make Valbuena aware of what was going on and help him out.

The French Football Federation took the moral high ground on December 10, when president Noel Le Graet said Benzema would not be selected for France until the situation changed. And now, of course, it has changed.

Although the FFF has yet to decide whether to lift the ban, national coach Didier Deschamps has made it clear he wants his top striker, saying: "You're innocent until proved guilty. I only think of the interests of the team – and football-wise it's not the same without Karim."

With Valbuena perhaps conveniently out of sorts on the pitch this season, the court of appeal ruling means it will be a huge shock if Benzema isn't in Deschamps' Euro 2016 squad of 23 when it is announced on May 12. WS

Cuba

BRYAN KAY

Wind of change ready to blow through Cuba

Defections to US may help open up game

Football doesn't exactly take pride of place in Cuba. At least not as far as the country's cloistered government is concerned.

Baseball and boxing are traditionally the sports of choice in the Caribbean's most populous nation, the communist country ruled by the Castro family since a revolution in 1959. Beat the Americans at their own game, the mantra seems to have been over the years, according to Cuban soccer expert Mario Lara.

But things might be changing as football becomes more popular, particularly among the young.

And a recent spate of defections by some of the country's top players while on US and Canadian soil has provided a window onto the latent talent pool that might be lurking behind the country's gradually peeling Cold War curtain.

Attack...Ariel Martinez takes on Trinidad & Tobago in the CONCACAF Gold Cup

> "Almost every week I hear from people interested in playing or coaching in Cuba. In five or seven years the teams could be pretty strong"
>
> Mario Lara, unofficial agent for players who have defected to the US

Lara has become the de facto agent for Cuban players on their clandestine desertion after landing in the United States, a Miami-based X-ray technician who steers them through US red tape and eventual trials with mostly American lower-division clubs.

Last year saw the largest reported exodus of Cuban football talent in a single calendar year. Some 10 players made flight from two separate national-team camps that had been held in the United States: one before the Gold Cup and the other before regional Olympic qualifying. Another defected after legally obtaining a visitor's visa at the US embassy in Cuban capital Havana, ostensibly to see family and friends.

Two of that contingent have since secured reasonably high-profile clubs. Ariel Martinez, a veteran attacker once dubbed the "Cuban Messi", joined US third-tier club Charleston Battery after helping his country to an unlikely Gold Cup quarter-final berth. He joined three other younger Cubans at Charleston – goalkeeper Odisnel Cooper, midfielder Maikel Chang and striker Heviel Cordoves – who had defected in previous years. And, more recently, Jorge Luis Corrales signed for former Italy captain Paolo Maldini's newly-formed Miami FC in the second-tier North American Soccer League.

Top level...Osvaldo Alonso of Seattle Sounders (in white) is rated among the best defensive midfielders in MLS

The flag carrier for the Cuban brand of football is Osvaldo Alonso, who defected during the 2007 Gold Cup, also on US soil. He first signed with Charleston Battery before earning a move to MLS big guns Seattle Sounders. He has become a fixture ever since and is one of the top defensive midfielders in the league.

Part of the reason players are so keen to leave Cuba is down to the lack of competitiveness in their homeland. The domestic league has a short season and is amateur. The country's best players quickly reach an artificial ceiling and feel their development is being stunted.

Cuban clubs don't play in regional continental competition. At youth level, its national teams compete well against other countries, says Chang, but their lack of experience shows later. The senior national side invariably struggles against the north American region's best, though they tend to hold their own at Caribbean level.

Yet Lara feels football is poised to supplant baseball and boxing to become Cuba's number one sport. The defecting players crave professionalism, he says, and a chance to test themselves at the highest level possible.

"As Cuba starts opening up, things will change," he claims. "Almost every week I hear from people interested in playing and coaching in Cuba. So I can see in five or seven years the teams are going to be pretty strong.

New beginning...goalkeeper Odisnel Cooper

"Football had real potential in Cuba between 1920 and 1940 when we had professional teams. We were the first team to win the Central American Games in 1930. We beat Jamaica, Honduras, even Costa Rica. After that, professionalism went down in Cuba and they started playing as amateurs. The last time the national team was strong was in the 1970s."

Cuba last made a World Cup finals in 1938, and despite their limitations in recent decades they have competed admirably at recent incarnations of the Gold Cup. They invariably finish in the first four at the sub-regional Caribbean Cup. With Cuban doors slowly prising open politically, it might not be too long before the country starts to challenge the wider CONCACAF regional heavyweights. And a freer flow of expertise may have much to do with it. WS

10-0. Villarreal knock out Napoli as a 1-1 draw in Naples gives them a 2-1 aggregate win.
USA: New signings Nigel De Jong, Ashley Cole and Jelle Van Damme make their debuts as LA Galaxy draw 0-0 with Santos Laguna of Mexico in the CONCACAF Champions League.

Friday February 26

ARGENTINA: Libertadores Cup holders River Plate begin their defence of the trophy with a 4-0 win away to Trujillanos of Venezuela.
FIFA: Gianni Infantino is elected president of FIFA.

Saturday February 27

CHINA: Two first-half goals from Ricardo Goulart give Guangzhou Evergrande a 2-0 win over Jiangsu Suning in the Chinese Super Cup.
COLOMBIA: Atletico Bucaramanga are held 0-0 at home by Rionegro Aguilas for a seventh draw in seven games this season.
EGYPT: Hamada Tolba makes his international debut at the age of 34 in a 2-0 win against Burkina Faso.
ENGLAND: Leicester City maintain top place in the Premier League with a late 1-0 win over Norwich City. Everton confirm British-Iranian businessman Farhad Moshiri has acquired a 49.9 per cent stake in the club and, subject to Premier League approval, will become their new major shareholder.
SPAIN: Antoine Griezmann keeps Atletico Madrid's title hopes alive as they beat Real Madrid 1-0.

Silverware...League Cup winners Manchester City

Sunday February 28

ENGLAND: Manchester City beat Liverpool on penalties in the Final of the League Cup at Wembley after a 1-1 draw. Marcus Rashford scores his second brace within a week as Manchester United beat Arsenal 3-2 at Old Trafford.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain's record of 36 games unbeaten in Ligue 1 comes to an end as they lose 2-1 away to Lyon.
GREECE: Olympiakos win the league title for a sixth year in a row, and 43rd in total, with a 3-0 victory at home to Veria.
ITALY: Juventus maintain their position at the top of Serie A as they beat Internazionale 2-0.

Monday February 29

ARGENTINA: Defending champions Boca Juniors sack coach Rodolfo Arruabarrena and put Rolando Schiavi in temporary charge after Sunday's 1-0 defeat to Racing.
GERMANY: Former Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness is released from prison after spending 21 months of a three-and-a-half year sentence behind bars for tax evasion.
ITALY: Fiorentina and Napoli lose ground on league leaders Juventus as they draw 1-1.

Tuesday March 1

CHINA: Ramires is sent off in his side's 3-2 AFC Champions League win at home to Jeonbuk Motors.
GERMANY: An Andre Schurrle hat-trick helps Wolfsburg to a 4-0 win at bottom side Hanover.
ITALY: Milan beat third-tier side Alessandria 5-0 to advance to the Italian Cup Final with a 6-0 aggregate win.
SOUTH KOREA: Adriano takes his tally to seven goals in two AFC Champions League games with a second-half hat-trick as Seoul come from a goal down to beat Sanfrecce Hiroshima of Japan 4-1.
SPAIN: Las Palmas record their biggest win of the season, beating fellow strugglers Getafe 4-0.

Wednesday March 2

ENGLAND: Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal and Manchester City all miss the chance to close the gap on leaders Leicester City as they lose to West Ham United, Swansea City and Liverpool respectively. Sunderland winger Adam Johnson is found guilty on one count of sexual activity with a 15-year-old girl.
FRANCE: Ligue 2 strugglers Sochaux cause an upset in the French Cup semi-finals as they beat Nantes 3-2 after extra-time. Holders Paris Saint-Germain win 3-1 at Saint-Etienne.
GREECE: The Greek Cup semi-final first leg between PAOK and Olympiakos is called off in the last minute after home fans clash with police and throw flares when a refereeing decision denies them a penalty with Olympiakos leading 2-1.
ITALY: Juventus lose 3-0 to

Internazionale and draw 3-3 on aggregate in the Italian Cup but go through to the Final on penalties.
TURKEY: UEFA ban Galatasaray from European participation during the next two seasons after they were found guilty of breaching Financial Fairplay regulations.

Thursday March 3

FRANCE: Marseille progress to the French Cup semi-finals with a 1-0 win over fifth-tier Granville.
MEXICO: America and Tigres complete an all-Mexican semi-final line-up in the CONCACAF Champions League as they knock out MLS clubs Seattle Sounders and Real Salt Lake respectively. Tigres now play Queretaro while America face Santos Laguna.
SPAIN: Lionel Messi scores a hat-trick as Barcelona beat Rayo Vallecano 5-1 and set a Spanish record of 35 consecutive games unbeaten in all competitions.

Friday March 4

BELGIUM: Gent draw 1-1 at lowly Leuven and replace Club Brugge at the top of the table.
PANAMA: The 2017 Centroamericana Cup, which also acts as the region's qualifying event for the CONCACAF Gold Cup, will be played in Panama, from January 17 to 28.
UEFA: Theodore Theodoridis is named acting general secretary of UEFA following Gianni Infantino's election as FIFA president. It is also announced that goal-line technology will be used in the Champions League and Europa League Finals.

Hat-trick...Bruno Fornaroli

Saturday March 5

AUSTRALIA: Bruno Fornaroli scores all three goals as Melbourne City beat Sydney 3-0 and becomes the

Russia

VICTOR GUSEV

The Russian Leicester

Shades of Ranieri and co as Berdiyev inspires Rostov

Rostov, once the great underdogs of the Russian Premier League, are closing in on their first title, having been saved from relegation last year by Kurban Berdiyev, the coach who once beat Barcelona at Camp Nou. A league victory would mark an extraordinary turnaround in fortunes for the team that is being dubbed, understandably, the Russian Leicester City.

After beating CSKA 2-0 at home, Rostov were level on points with the mighty Army team with 10 games to go, but occupied top position thanks to a better head-to-head record, having only lost 1-0 to CSKA in Moscow.

Last season Rostov were destroyed 6-0 by CSKA. They also lost 7-3 to Dynamo Moscow and were beaten 5-0 by champions-to-be Zenit. The team were on the verge of quitting the Premier League and at one stage their players had not been paid for five months. Their coach at the time, Igor Gamula, also received a five-game ban for racist comments.

It was at this point Berdiyev came to the rescue. Despite sensational successive league triumphs in 2008 and 2009, he had been fired by Rubin Kazan after 13 seasons in charge following an internal row. Rostov's new coach brought with him from Rubin important players including defender Cesar Navas, a Real Madrid academy product, Ecuador midfielder Christian Noboa and Iran striker Serdar Azmun.

Despite the reinforcements, the combined value of the Rostov squad has been estimated at just €40million – the ninth biggest among Russian clubs – while their annual budget looks a joke compared to those of Zenit and Dynamo.

Sponsored by the government of the Rostov region, a southern area of Russia on the banks of the Don River, the team has never before been riding so high. Rostov, who celebrate their 85th anniversary in May, only joined the top flight in 1994. Their previous best performance was sixth place in 1998, although they did win the 2014 Russian Cup.

Berdiyev is remembered in Europe for Rubin's impressive record against Barcelona in the Champions League, including a 2-1 away victory in 2009, which was followed by two draws (0-0 and 1-1) and just one defeat (2-0) the following year. Rubin's discipline and strictly defensive style became the coach's trademark, although Berdiyev later declared a change of style with more emphasis on attack.

He brought a new game vision to Rostov. Traditionally mocked for a habit of "parking the bus" which, says ex-Rostov striker Artyom Dzyuba, "would make even Jose Mourinho jealous", Berdiyev's team today is a good mixture of solid defence and fast counter-attacks.

The defence is marshalled by 36-year-old Navas, alongside national-team contender Ivan Novoseltsev. Unyielding captain Alexander Gatskan, a Moldovan, forms a holding but creative midfield triangle with the clever Noboa and the explosive Guelor Kanga of Gabon. The fast and technically skilled Azmun is joined up front by another good finisher, Dmitri Poloz. Then there is Soslan Dzanayev, who went through a few error-prone seasons with Spartak Moscow before becoming one of the league's most reliable goalkeepers.

But Rostov's biggest star is the coach. Berdiyev is highly religious, an avid reader and chess player, and already is being talked about as a candidate for the national job after Euro 2016 if Russia don't do well in France or if Leonid Slutskiy, currently combining the two posts, chooses to stay with CSKA.

And Rostov's league triumph, if it happens, would probably be an even bigger surprise here than Leicester's success for English fans. WS

New vision... Kurban Berdiyev

first player to score 20 goals in an A-League campaign.
ENGLAND: Second-place Tottenham Hotspur draw 2-2 at home to third-place Arsenal in the north London derby. Leicester City stay top with a 1-0 win at Watford.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich maintain their five-point lead with a 0-0 draw at second-place Borussia Dortmund.
PORTUGAL: Benfica replace Sporting at the top of the table with a 1-0 victory away to their Lisbon rivals.
QATAR: Al Rayyan wrap up the Qatari Stars League title with a 5-0 win at Al Wakrah.
SPAIN: Cristiano Ronaldo becomes La Liga's second-top scorer of all time as his four goals in Real Madrid's 7-1 victory over Celta Vigo takes him on to 252 – 55 behind Lionel Messi.

Sunday March 6

CHINA: Defending champions Guangzhou Evergrande's 2-1 loss at Chongqing Lifan on the opening weekend of the new season is their first defeat in 27 league games.
ITALY: Juventus equal the Serie A record of nine consecutive games without conceding a goal as they win 2-0 at Atalanta to restore their three-point lead at the top of the league.
SCOTLAND: Celtic and Rangers are drawn together in the semi-finals of the Scottish Cup.

Monday March 7

ENGLAND: Swansea City manager Francesco Guidolin is released from hospital following a chest infection. The 60-year-old was admitted to a respiratory specialist in London last week and missed the match against Arsenal.
ITALY: Massimiliano Allegri, who led Juventus to a domestic double and the Champions League Final, wins the Panchina d'Oro ("golden bench") for the best Italian coach in Serie A last season. Lazio's Stefano Pioli and Maurizio Sarri of Napoli are second and third respectively.
ROMANIA: Targu Mures have four players sent off, and a further seven booked, as they lose 2-0 at home to Pandurii Targu Jiu.

Tuesday March 8

ARGENTINA: Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero, who both missed the 1-1 draw with Brazil and the 1-0

Success...Rostov celebrate scoring at Rubin Kazan

victory over Colombia in November due to injury, return to the national squad for the World Cup qualifiers at the end of the month, but there is no place for Carlos Tevez, who is struggling for form with Boca Juniors.
BULGARIA: Brazilian-born midfielder Marcelinho, who has played in the domestic championship for five years with Ludogorets, is called into the Bulgaria squad for the first time.
ENGLAND: Margaret Byrne resigns as Sunderland chief executive over her role in the Adam Johnson criminal case, in which the former England winger was convicted of sexual activity with a child.
GERMANY: Wolfsburg beat Gent 4-2 on aggregate and reach the last eight of the Champions League for the first time. Eintracht Frankfurt appoint Niko Kovac as coach. He will be assisted by his brother, Robert.
KAZAKHSTAN: Kairat win the Super Cup for the first time, beating Astana on penalties.
SPAIN: Real Madrid beat Roma 2-0 for a 4-0 aggregate victory to make the quarter-finals of the Champions League for the sixth season running.

Wednesday March 9

DENMARK: Brondby coach Thomas Frank resigns after being criticised by the club chairman, Jan Bech Andersen, in an online fan forum using his son's account.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain knock Chelsea out of the Champions League for a second successive season, winning 2-1 at Stamford Bridge for a 4-2 aggregate victory.
SPAIN: Barcelona, whose Nou Camp stadium is already the biggest in Europe, announce plans to increase the capacity from 99,354 to 105,000 by the 2021-22 season.

Thursday March 10

ARGENTINA: Federico Carrizo rescues a point for Boca Juniors in their Libertadores Cup game away to Bolivar with a 95th-minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw. Defending champions River Plate are held 1-1 at home by Sao Paulo. Sergio Aguero announces he will return to Independiente in 2018 when his contract with Manchester City expires.
ENGLAND: In the Europa League, Liverpool beat Manchester United 2-0 in their first European meeting. Tottenham Hotspur slump to their heaviest defeat of the season, losing 3-0 away to Borussia Dortmund.
ITALY: Serie A strugglers Palermo replace Beppe Iachini with Walter Novellino as coach. Lazio draw 1-1 at Sparta Prague in the Europa League.
SPAIN: Athletic Bilbao beat Liga

Nigeria

OLUWASHINA OKELEJI

Nigeria hit by Oliseh's exit

Caretaker in charge for Egypt qualifiers

Just weeks before Nigeria's crucial African Nations Cup double-header with Egypt, Sunday Oliseh's short but tempestuous tenure as national coach ended when he resigned, citing "contract violations, unpaid wages and lack of support" as the reason for his departure.

The former Borussia Dortmund and Juventus midfielder took over from Stephen Keshi in July 2015 but was soon under pressure after Nigeria failed to get past the group stage at this year's African Nations Championship in Rwanda.

Despite a lack of managerial experience, the eloquent Oliseh's appointment had been widely applauded in his homeland. A UEFA Pro Licence holder who had impressed with his appearances as a TV pundit in the region, his arrival was greeted on live TV by Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) president Amaju Pinnick boldly declaring that the Super Eagles had "just signed the Pep Guardiola of Africa". However, within a matter of weeks it all started to go wrong.

Oliseh's decision to replace goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama as captain led to the country's most-capped player, with 101 appearances to his name, quitting international football. He was followed two weeks later by striker Emmanuel Emenike, who said he was stepping away to allow "peace to reign in the team".

And then there was the disappointment in Rwanda, where Oliseh claimed the home-based national side were not motivated to succeed and described them as "a car driving on an empty tank".

But it was his decision to go public about his three months of unpaid wages, the outstanding bonuses and the money problems affecting the team in Rwanda that most embarrassed his employers.

Local media criticism was vociferous and in early February Oliseh posted an eight-minute video rant on his own website to hit back at what he called the "insanity" of his critics, stating: "No matter what these critics say, as long as I am coach of the Super Eagles, I won't pay anybody to write positively about me in the media as some of these critics have asked me to."

Filling the gap... Samson Siasia

There was undisguised anger across the country over his action, but he later apologised to the NFF for his outburst, saying it had only been aimed at the Nigerian media and some of his former international team-mates.

Yet with no friends inside the federation, his ex-colleagues up in arms and the media clamouring for a public apology, Oliseh decided to walk away.

"At times I felt I was not only playing against my opponents but also against my own federation, especially the technical committee," he says. "We had stipulations clearly made out in the contract to avoid constant interventions or interference from them that would impede our progress, but it was non-stop and was beginning to weigh on the players.

"[The NFF] are so obsessed with selecting the team, deciding who plays and having a say on who is invited to the squads. No coach worth his salt would allow somebody else to decide who plays and who doesn't play.

> "At times I felt I was not only playing against my opponents but also my own federation"
> Sunday Oliseh

"The thing that bothered me the most was the welfare of my players. The unpaid benefits to them and my assistant coaches, who went as much as six months without wages, were heartbreaking. I also went several months without pay. It gets to a point when you ask if they want us to progress in the job. "

The NFF "categorically" denies the allegations and has accused Oliseh of not reciprocating the respect it showed him, adding: "We find it strange that Mr Oliseh waited to receive monies owed him before resigning.

"Two days before his resignation, he had passionately appealed that we unite as one force to fight the battle on the football field with the Egyptian national team. We had no idea he was selling a dummy.

"Contrary to the terms of his contract, coach Oliseh went on air several times to talk about the NFF's finances and in a derogatory manner."

The NFF swiftly reappointed Samson Siasia as caretaker coach for the Group G qualifiers against Egypt.

National under-23 boss Siasia was previously in charge of the senior team from December 2010 to October 2011 before his contract was terminated following the team's failure to qualify for the 2012 Nations Cup.

With six coaches in the last six years, this latest shambles again shows that Nigeria have an itchy finger firmly on the self-destruct button. And amid constant suggestions that local coaches get too involved in player-management issues, and pander to agents and favourite players, the NFF says it will be looking to hire a foreign coach on a permanent basis. WS

Gone... Emmanuel Emenike (left) quit over tensions in the Nigeria squad

rivals Valencia 1-0 in the Europa League, while Sevilla draw 0-0 at Basle and Villarreal win 2-0 against Bayer Leverkusen.

TURKEY: Fenerbahce claim a 12th successive home win in all competitions with a 1-0 victory over Braga in the Europa League.

Friday *March 11*

AUSTRALIA: Melbourne City move into second place with a 1-0 win at Adelaide United to end the leaders' 14-game unbeaten league run.

ENGLAND: Following days of speculation, Newcastle United finally sack manager Steve McClaren. A few hours later, Rafa Benitez is named as his replacement.

FRANCE: Karim Benzema will be eligible to play at Euro 2016 after some legal restrictions were lifted on the striker, who is being investigated for his part in an alleged plot to blackmail France team-mate Mathieu Valbuena.

Home advantage... Fenerbahce (in yellow) beat Braga

GERMANY: Third-place Hertha Berlin beat fourth-place Schalke 2-0 to open up a four-point gap between the pair.

ITALY: Gianluigi Buffon sets a new Serie A record of 10 consecutive clean sheets as Juventus beat Sassuolo 1-0.

RUSSIA: Brazil-born Lokomotiv Moscow goalkeeper Guilherme, who recently received Russian citizenship, is named in the national squad for the friendlies against Lithuania and France.

UKRAINE: Dynamo Kiev's 41-year-old keeper Olexandr Shovkovskiy plays his 412th Ukrainian top-flight game, and equals Oleh Shelayev's record, in a 2-1 win at Karpaty.

Saturday *March 12*

EGYPT: Martin Jol gets his inaugural

ESM XI

EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

SEASON RANKINGS

Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Keylor NAVAS (Real Madrid)	21 votes
Petr CECH (Arsenal)	10
Gianluigi BUFFON (Juventus)	8
Claudio BRAVO (Barcelona)	6
Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	6
Manuel NEUER (Bayern Munich)	5
Pepe REINA (Napoli)	4
Gianluigi DONNARUMMA (Milan)	3
Samir HANDANOVIC (Internazionale)	3
Willy CABALLERO (Manchester City)	2
Kasper SCHMEICHEL (Leicester City)	2
Alphonse AREOLA (Villarreal)	1
Thibaut COURTOIS (Chelsea)	1
David DE GEA (Manchester United)	1
Ralf FAHRMANN (Schalke)	1
Joe HART (Manchester City)	1
Marvin HITZ (Augsburg)	1
Carlos KAMENI (Malaga)	1
Hugo LLORIS (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Fernando MUSLERA (Galatasaray)	1
Hakon OPDAL (Start)	1
Sergio RICO (Sevilla)	1
Kevin TRAPP (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Victor VALDES (Standard Liege)	1

DEFENDERS

Diego GODIN (Atletico Madrid)	27
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	20
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	14
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	13
DANI ALVES (Barcelona)	12
Jerome BOATENG (Bayern Munich)	11
Philipp LAHM (Bayern Munich)	11
Serge AURIER (Paris Saint-Germain)	10
FILIPE LUIS (Atletico Madrid)	10
Toby ALDERWEIRELD (Tottenham Hotspur)	9
Laurent KOSCIELNY (Arsenal)	9
THIAGO SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	9
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	8
Lukasz PISZCZEK (Borussia Dortmund)	7
Matthias GINTER (Borussia Dortmund)	6
Mats HUMMELS (Borussia Dortmund)	6
Nicolas OTAMENDI (Manchester City)	6
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	5
ALEX SANDRO (Juventus)	5
Robert HUTH (Leicester City)	5
Jeison MURILLO (Internazionale)	5
Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	5
Chris SMALLING (Manchester United)	5
Raphael VARANE (Real Madrid)	5
Hector BELLERIN (Arsenal)	4
Alessandro FLORENZI (Roma)	4
Christian FUCHS (Leicester City)	4
JUANFRAN (Atletico Madrid)	4
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	4
Nacho MONREAL (Arsenal)	4
Andrea BARZAGLI (Juventus)	3
DANILO (Real Madrid)	3
Matteo DARMIAN (Manchester United)	3
JAVI MARTINEZ (Bayern Munich)	3
Stephan LICHTSTEINER (Juventus)	3
Victor RUIZ (Villarreal)	3
Raul ALBIOL (Napoli)	2
Giorgio CHIELLINI (Juventus)	2
Branislav IVANOVIC (Chelsea)	2
Miguel LAYUN (Porto)	2
MAXWELL (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Mateo MUSACCHIO (Villarreal)	2
Kurt ZOUMA (Chelsea)	2
Davide ASTORI (Fiorentina)	1
Juan BERNAT (Bayern Munich)	1
Daley BLIND (Manchester United)	1
Olivier BOSCAGLI (Napoli)	1
Alberto BOTIA (Olympiakos)	1
Dani CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	1
Nathaniel CLYNE (Liverpool)	1
DAVID LUIZ (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Erik DURM (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Patrice EVRA (Juventus)	1
FABIO COENTRAO (Monaco)	1
Roderic FILIPPI (GFC Ajaccio)	1
Christophe JALLET (Lyon)	1
Presnel KIMPEMBE (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Vincent KOMPANY (Manchester City)	1
Julian KORB (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1
Layvin KURZAWA (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Sebastian LANGKAMP (Hertha Berlin)	1
Dejan LOVREN (Liverpool)	1
MAICON (Roma)	1
Adam MASINIA (Bologna)	1
MAURICIO (Lazio)	1
MIRANDA (Internazionale)	1
NALDO (Wolfsburg)	1
Erik PIETERS (Stoke City)	1
Baba RAHMAN (Chelsea)	1
Winston REID (West Ham United)	1
Gonzalo RODRIGUEZ (Fiorentina)	1
Bacary SAGNA (Manchester City)	1
Nelson SEMEDO (Benfica)	1
SERGI Roberto (Barcelona)	1
Martin SKRTEL (Liverpool)	1
Aytac SULU (Darmstadt)	1
Jonathan TAH (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Alex TELLES (Internazionale)	1
John TERRY (Chelsea)	1
Patrick VAN AANHOLT (Sunderland)	1
Gregory VAN DER WIEL (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Jan VERTONGHEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Oscar WENDT (Borussia Monchengladbach)	1
Dries WUYTENS (Willem II)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Mesut OZIL (Arsenal)	22
Thomas MULLER (Bayern Munich)	18
Riyad MAHREZ (Leicester City)	16
Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	14
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	14
DOUGLAS COSTA (Bayern Munich)	14
Paul POGBA (Juventus)	13
Sergio BUSQUETS (Barcelona)	10
Andres INIESTA (Barcelona)	8
N'Golo KANTE (Leicester City)	7
Philippe COUTINHO (Liverpool)	6
Dele ALLI (Tottenham Hotspur)	5
Henrykh MKHITARYAN (Borussia Dortmund)	5
CASEMIRO (Real Madrid)	4
Hakan CALHANOGLU (Bayer Leverkusen)	3
FELIPE MELO (Internazionale)	3
Luka MODRIC (Real Madrid)	3
Dmitri PAYET (West Ham United)	3
Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona)	3
Julian WEIGL (Borussia Dortmund)	3
Jose CALLEJON (Napoli)	2
Francis COQUELIN (Arsenal)	2
Danny DRINKWATER (Leicester City)	2
Christian ERIKSEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
JORGINHO (Napoli)	2
KOKE (Atletico Madrid)	2
Gary MEDEL (Internazionale)	2
Miralem PJANIC (Roma)	2
David SILVA (Manchester City)	2
TIAGO (Atletico Madrid)	2
XABI ALONSO (Bayern Munich)	2
ADRIEN SILVA (Sporting Lisbon)	1
ANDRE ANDRE (Porto)	1
Ross BARKLEY (Everton)	1
Karim BELLARABI (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Patrick CAPELLE (Angers)	1
Santi CAZORLA (Arsenal)	1
Denis CHERYSHEV (Valencia)	1
Kingsley COMAN (Bayern Munich)	1
Mahmoud DAHOOD (Borussia M'gladbach)	1
Lassana DIARRA (Marseille)	1
Eric DIER (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Daniel DIDAVI (Stuttgart)	1
Julian DRAXLER (Wolfsburg)	1
Stephan EL SHAARAWY (Roma)	1
Cesc FABREGAS (Chelsea)	1
FELIPE ANDERSON (Lazio)	1
Matias FERNANDEZ (Fiorentina)	1
Jordan FERRI (Lyon)	1
Nicolas GAITAN (Benfica)	1
Fredy GUARIN (Internazionale)	1
Yevhen KONOPLYANKA (Sevilla)	1
Erik LAMELA (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Juan MATA (Manchester United)	1
Blaise MATUIDI (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
James MILNER (Liverpool)	1
Cheikh N'DOYE (Angers)	1
OSCAR (Chelsea)	1
Dennis PRAET (Anderlecht)	1
Adrien RABIOT (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Aaron RAMSEY (Arsenal)	1
Marco REUS (Borussia Dortmund)	1
James RODRIGUEZ (Real Madrid)	1
Bryan RUIZ (Sporting Lisbon)	1
Mohamed SALAH (Roma)	1
Marc STENDERA (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
THIAGO ALCANTARA (Bayern Munich)	1

Midfield star ...Mesut Ozil

CAF Champions League campaign off to a decent start as his Al Ahly side claim a goalless draw in Angola against Recreativo do Libolo.
GERMANY: After dropping five points in their previous two games, Bayern Munich rediscover their touch to beat Werder Bremen 5-0.
RUSSIA: Rostov beat CSKA Moscow 2-0 to go joint top on goal difference with their opponents.
SPAIN: Barcelona win 6-0 at home to Getafe and are unbeaten in their first 20 matches of 2016 – which is the best start of a calendar year in the club's history.

Sunday *March 13*

ENGLAND: Arsenal, FA Cup-winners for the past two seasons, go out at home to Watford, losing 2-1 in the quarter-finals. Manchester United draw 1-1 with West Ham United.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain record the biggest-ever away win in Ligue 1 history, beating bottom side Troyes 9-0 to clinch a fourth successive Ligue 1 title.
GERMANY: A fan dies after falling ill during Borussia Dortmund's 2-0 win at home to coach Thomas Tuchel's former club Mainz.
GREECE: Having already secured the title, Olympiakos celebrate with a 3-1 win at home to Athens rivals Panathinaikos with two goals in the last three minutes, from Manuel Da Costa and Brown Ideye.
HOLLAND: Ajax twice surrender the lead and draw 2-2 at home to NEC, missing the chance to overtake PSV at the top of the Eredevisie.
SCOTLAND: Ross County win their first major trophy as Alex Schalk's last-minute goal gives them a 2-1 victory over Hibernian in the Scottish League Cup Final.
SPAIN: Valencia suffer a derby defeat as they lose 1-0 at La Liga's bottom team Levante.

Success...Ross County's Paul Quinn

Monday *March 14*

ALBANIA: Skenderbeu draw 1-1 away to second-place Partizan Tirana to remain four points clear at the top of the table.
ENGLAND: Rafa Benitez's first game in charge of Newcastle United ends in defeat as Leicester City win 1-0.
FRANCE: Bordeaux announce Ulrich Rame will take over as coach following Willy Sagnol's departure.
GEORGIA: Ex-Slovakia boss Vladimir Weiss is appointed national coach for Georgia's 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign.
ITALY: Udinese sack coach Stefano Colantuono the day after a 2-1 loss to Roma leaves the club 16th in Serie A.
TURKEY: Galatasaray confirm the father of Turkey international Umut Bulut was killed in Sunday's terrorist attack in Ankara which claimed at least 37 lives.
SOUTH AFRICA: Former SAFA chief executive officer Leslie Sedibe is banned from all football activity for five years following an investigation

FEBRUARY 2016

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Yaya TOURE (Manchester City)	1
Borja VALERO (Fiorentina)	1
Marco VERRATTI (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Arturo VIDAL (Bayern Munich)	1
Daniel WASS (Celta Vigo)	1
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Newcastle United)	1
WILLIAN (Chelsea)	1

FORWARDS

Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona)	39
Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	24
NEYMAR (Barcelona)	21
Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	18
Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (B Dortmund)	17
Gonzalo HIGUAIN (Napoli)	17
Jamie VARDY (Leicester City)	17
Paulo DYBALA (Juventus)	12
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	9
Zlatan IBRAHIMOVIC (Paris Saint-Germain)	9
Cristiano RONALDO (Real Madrid)	9
Anthony MARTIAL (Manchester United)	6
NOLITO (Celta Vigo)	6
Antoine GRIEZMANN (Atletico Madrid)	5
Javier HERNANDEZ (Bayer Leverkusen)	5
Gareth BALE (Real Madrid)	4
JONAS (Benfica)	4
Olivier GIROUD (Arsenal)	3
Marko ARNAUTOVIC (Stoke City)	2
Kevin GAMEIRO (Sevilla)	2
Odion IGHALO (Watford)	2
Romelu LUKAKU (Everton)	2
ALEX TEIXEIRA (Shakhtar Donetsk)	1
Borja BASTON (Eibar)	1
Hatem BEN ARFA (Nice)	1
Roberto FIRMINO (Liverpool)	1
Rudy GESTEDE (Aston Villa)	1
Kelechi IHEANACHO (Manchester City)	1
Lorenzo INSIGNE (Napoli)	1
Harry KANE (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Dirk KUYT (Feyenoord)	1
Massimo MACCARONE (Empoli)	1
Mario MANDZUKIC (Juventus)	1
Marcus RASHFORD (Manchester United)	1
Franck RIBERY (Bayern Munich)	1
Wayne ROONEY (Manchester United)	1
Alexis SANCHEZ (Arsenal)	1
Leroy SANE (Schalke)	1
Islam SLIMANI (Sporting Lisbon)	1

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ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

GOLDEN SHOE

Pos	NAME		Goals	Factor	Points
1	Gonzalo Higuain	Napoli	27	2	54
	Cristiano Ronaldo	Real Madrid	27	2	54
3	Jonas	Benfica	26	2	52
	Luis Suarez	Barcelona	26	2	52
5	Robert Lewandowski	Bayern Munich	24	2	48
6	Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang	Borussia Dortmund	22	2	44
	Lionel Messi	Barcelona	22	2	44
8	Zlatan Ibrahimovic	Paris Saint-Germain	27	1.5	40.5
	Eran Zahavi	Maccabi Tel Aviv	27	1.5	40.5
10	Neymar	Barcelona	20	2	40
	Islam Slimani	Sporting Lisbon	20	2	40
12	Karim Benzema	Real Madrid	19	2	38
	Harry Kane	Tottenham Hotspur	19	2	38
	Thomas Muller	Bayern Munich	19	2	38
	Jamie Vardy	Leicester City	19	2	38
16	Romelu Lukaku	Everton	18	2	36
17	Nemanja Nikolic	Legia Warsaw	23	1.5	34.5
18	Aritz Aduriz	Athletic Bilbao	17	2	34
19	Alex Teixeira	Shakhtar Donetsk	22	1.5	33
20	Sergio Aguero	Manchester City	16	2	32
	Borja	Eibar	16	2	32
	Antoine Griezmann	Atletico Madrid	16	2	32
23	Leo Bonatini	Estoril	15	2	30
	Ruben Castro	Betis	15	2	30
	Lucas Perez	Deportivo La Coruna	15	2	30
	Riyad Mahrez	Leicester City	15	2	30
27.	Fernando Cavenaghi	Apoel	19	1.5	28.5
	Vincent Janssen	AZ	19	1.5	28.5
	Luuk De Jong	PSV	19	1.5	28.5
30	Gareth Bale	Real Madrid	14	2	28
	Paulo Dybala	Juventus	14	2	28
	Javier Hernandez	Bayer Leverkusen	14	2	28
	Odion Ighalo	Watford	14	2	28
	Rafael Martins	Moreirense	14	2	28
	Konstantinos Mitroglou	Benfica	14	2	28
	Bruno Moreira	Pacos Ferreira	14	2	28
	Tomas Radzinevicius	Suduva	28	1	28
38	Mario Gomez	Besiktas	18	1.5	27
	Jonatan Soriano	Red Bull Salzburg	18	1.5	27
40	Imanol Agirretxe	Real Sociedad	13	2	26
	Carlos Bacca	Milan	13	2	26
	Kévin Gameiro	Sevilla	13	2	26
	Leigh Griffiths	Celtic	26	1	26
	Raffael	Monchengladbach	13	2	26
45	David Arshakyan	Trakai	25	1	25
	Richard Towell	Dundalk	25	1	25
47	Vincent Aboubakar	Porto	12	2	24
	Eder	Sampdoria/Internazionale	12	2	24
	Kostas Fortounis	Olympiakos	16	1.5	24
	Olivier Giroud	Arsenal	12	2	24
	Mauro Icardi	Internazionale	12	2	24
	Marc Janko	Basle	16	1.5	24
	Salomon Kalou	Hertha Berlin	12	2	24
	Dirk Kuyt	Feyenoord	16	1.5	24
	Alexander Meier	Eintracht Frankfurt	12	2	24
	Dino Ndlovu	Anorthosis	16	1.5	24
	Ilija Nestorovski	Inter Zapresic	16	1.5	24
	Ingemar Teever	Levadia	24	1	24

(latest standings at 13.03.16)

On target... Jonas

Veteran... Aritz Aduriz

into alleged match-fixing before the 2010 World Cup. Steve Goddard and Adeel Carelse, who each served as SAFA's head of referees, are given suspensions of two years.
SPAIN: Granada climb out of the relegation zone with a 1-1 draw at home to Espanyol.

Tuesday March 15

COLOMBIA: Atletico Nacional beat Penarol 4-0 to become the first team to qualify for the knockout stage of the Libertadores Cup.
ITALY: National coach Antonio Conte announces he will step down after this summer's Euro finals. Luigi De Canio returns to lead Udinese for the final weeks of the season.
MEXICO: Queretaro and Tigres draw 0-0 in their CONCACAF Champions League semi-final first leg.
SPAIN: Atletico Madrid go through to the last eight of the Champions League, beating PSV 8-7 on penalties in the highest-scoring shoot-out in the history of the European Cup/ Champions League.
SWITZERLAND: Josip Drmic, who scored three goals in the qualifying campaign, will miss the Euros this summer after undergoing surgery for a knee injury.

Wednesday March 16

GERMANY: After surrendering a 2-0 lead in the away leg, Bayern Munich come from 2-0 down in the return to draw 4-4 on aggregate with Juventus before scoring twice more in extra time in their last-16 Champions League tie.
JORDAN: Harry Redknapp agrees to take charge of the national team on a short-term basis for their World Cup/Asian Cup joint-qualifiers against Bangladesh and Australia.
MEXICO: Santos are held 0-0 by America in the home leg of their CONCACAF Champions League semi-final.
SPAIN: Barcelona beat Arsenal 5-1 on aggregate to reach the quarter-finals of the Champions League for the ninth season running.

Thursday March 17

ENGLAND: Leicester City midfielder Danny Drinkwater is called into the national squad for the first time. There is a Europa League-record crowd of 75,180 at Manchester United as they exit the competition to Liverpool.
SPAIN: Sevilla claim a record 11th successive Europa League home win as they beat Basle to reach the last eight of the tournament. Valencia coach Gary Neville is sent to the stands as his team lose to Athletic Bilbao on away goals. WS

Club football

AFRICA

CAF SUPER CUP

(Champions League holders, TP Mazembe v Confederation Cup holders, Etoile Sahel)

Feb 20 - Lubumbashi, DR Congo
TP Mazembe (DRC) 2 (Nii Adjei 20, 45+1)
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1 (Msakni 45+3)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Nampiandraza (Mad)
TP Mazembe: Gbohouo - Chongo, Kimwaki, Coulibaly, Kasusula, Bokadi, Nii Adjei (Singuluma 87), Sinkala, Assale (Meschak 67), Bolingi, Traore (Ulimwengu 78).
Etoile Sahel: Mathlouthi - Abderrazak, Jemal, Brigui, Boughattas, Msakni, Ben Amor, Bedoui (Diogo 33), Kom, Lahmar (Drame 65), Akaichi (Tej 85).

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Preliminary round

1st legs - Feb12-14; 2nd legs - Feb 26-Mar 6
AS Douanes (Sen) v Horoya (Gui) 0-0, 0-4 (agg 0-4); Ashanti Gold (Gha) v MO Bejaia (Alg) 1-0, 1-3 (agg 2-3); Cercle de Joachim (Mrs) v Young Africans (Tan) 0-1, 0-2 (agg 0-3); Chicken Inn (Zim) v Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Club Africain (Tun) v AS Tanda (IvC) 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0); CotonTchad (Chd) v ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 0-1, 0-0 (agg 0-1); Gor Mahia (Ken) v CNaPS Sport (Mad) 1-2, 0-1 (agg 1-3); Lioli (Les) v Vital'O (Bdi) 1-2, 1-0 (agg 2-2, Vital'O on away goals); Mafunzo (Zan) v AS Vita (DRC) 0-3, 0-1 (agg 0-4); Mangasport (Gab) v Etoile du Congo (Con) 0-0, 0-3 (agg 0-3); Mbabane Swallows (Swa) v APR (Rwa) 1-0, 1-4 (agg 2-4); Nimba United (Lbr) v Union Douala (Cam) 1-3, 0-1 (agg 1-4); Olympique Khouribga (Mor) v Gamtel (Gam) 2-1, 2-1 (agg 4-2); Onze Createurs (Mli) v Al Ahli Tripoli (Lby) 1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2); Recreativo do Libolo (Ang) v Racing Micomeseng (EqG) 5-1, 4-0 (agg 9-1); Saint George (Eth) v St Michel United (Sey) 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1); Stade Malien (Mli) v Racing Bobo Dioulasso (BuF) 3-1, 1-0 (agg 4-1); Vipers (Uga) v Enyimba (Nga) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Wydad Casablanca (Mor) v AS Douanes (Nig) 2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2); Zesco United (Zam) v Al Ghazal (SSu) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0)

Mochudi Centre Chiefs (Bot) v Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) – *Mochudi Centre Chiefs withdrew, Ferroviario Maputo given walkover;*
Volcan (Com) v Kaizer Chiefs (SAf) – *Volcan failed to show for 2nd leg, Kaizer Chiefs (who won1st leg 4-0) given walkover;*
Warri Wolves (Nga) v Sporting Praia Cruz (STP) – *Sporting Praia Cruz failed to show for1st leg, Warri Wolves given walkover*

● **Byes to next round:** *AC Leopards (Con), Al Ahly (Egy), Al Hilal (Sud), Al Merrikh (Sud), Coton Sport (Cam), ES Setif (Alg), Etoile Sahel (Tun), TP Mazembe (DRC), Zamalek (Egy)*

CONFEDERATION CUP

Preliminary round

1st legs - Feb12-14; 2nd legs - Feb 26-Mar 5
Al Ittihad (Lby) v Sonidep (Nig) 4-1, 1-3 (agg 5-4); Bakaridjan (Mli) v Stade Gabesien (Tun) 1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2, Stade Gabesien 4-3 on pens); Defence Force (Eth) v Misr El Makasa (Egy) 1-3, 0-3 (agg 1-6); Diables Noirs (Con) v Africa Sports (IvC) 1-2, 1-2 (agg 2-4); Fomboni (Com) v Atletico Olympic (Bdi) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Harare City (Zim) v AS Adema (Mad) 3-2, 3-1 (agg 6-3); Kawkab Marrakech (Mor) v USFA (BuF) 3-0, 0-3 (agg 3-3, Kawkab 5-4 on pens); Khartoum SC (Sud) v SC Villa (Uga) 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2); Lightstars (Sey) v Bidvest Wits (SAf) 0-3, 0-6 (agg 0-9); Nasarawa United (Nga) v Generation Foot (Sen) 2-1, 0-0 (agg 2-1); Police (Rwa) v Atlabara (SSu) 3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3); Renaissance (Chd) v New Star (Cam) 1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2); Sagrada Esperanca (Ang) v Ajax Cape Town (SAf) 1-2, 2-0 (agg 3-2); SC Gagnoa (IvC) v USFAS (Mli) 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0); St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) v Bandari (Ken) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1); Vita Club Mokanda (Con) v Akwa United (Nga) 0-1, 1-0 (agg 1-1, Vita Club 6-5 on pens)

JKU (Zan) v Gaborone United (Bot) – *Gaborone withdrew,JKU given walkover;*
UMS de Loum (Cam) v Deportivo Mongomo (EqG) – *UMS given walkover after Mongomo fielded an ineligible player (Mongomo had originally won the tie 4-2 on pens after a 0-0 aggregate draw);* Wallidan (Gam) v MC Oran (Alg) – *Wallidan withdrew, MC Oran given walkover*

● **Byes to next round:** *Al Ahly Shendi (Sud), AS Kaloum (Gui), Azam (Tan), Barrack Young Controllers II (Lbr), CF Mounana (Gab), CS Constantine (Alg), Don Bosco (DRC), ENPPI (Egy), Esperance (Tun), FUS Rabat (Mor), Liga Desportiva Maputo (Moz), Medeama (Gha), Zanaco (Zam)*

EUROPE

EUROPA LEAGUE

1st knockout round

1st legs - Feb16/18; 2nd legs - Feb 24/25
Anderlecht (Blg) v Olympiakos (Gre) 1-0, 2-1 (aet) (agg 3-1); Augsburg (Ger) v Liverpool (Eng) 0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1); Borussia Dortmund (Ger) v Porto (Por) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0); Fenerbahce (Tur) v Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1); Fiorentina (Ita) v Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Galatasaray (Tur) v Lazio (Ita) 1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4); Marseille (Fra) v Athletic Bilbao (Spa) 0-1, 1-1 (agg 1-2); Midtjylland (Den) v Manchester United (Eng) 2-1, 1-5 (agg 3-6); Saint-Etienne (Fra) v Basle (Swi) 3-2, 1-2 (agg 4-4, Basle on away goals); Sevilla (Spa) v Molde (Nor) 3-0, 0-1 (agg 3-1); Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) v Schalke (Ger) 0-0, 3-0 (agg 3-0); Sion (Swi) v Sporting Braga (Por) 1-2, 2-2 (agg 3-4); Sparta Prague (CzR) v Krasnodar (Rus) 1-0, 3-0 (agg 4-0); Sporting Lisbon (Por) v Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 0-1, 1-3 (agg 1-4); Valencia (Spa) v Rapid Vienna (Aut) 6-0, 4-0 (agg 10-0); Villarreal (Spa) v Napoli (Ita) 1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)

CONCACAF

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Feb 23/24; 2nd legs - Mar1/2
Los Angeles Galaxy (USA) v Santos Laguna (Mex) 0-0, 0-4 (agg 0-4)
Queretaro (Mex) v DC United (USA) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1)
Seattle Sounders (USA) v America (Mex) 2-2, 1-3 (agg 3-5)
Tigres (Mex) v Real Salt Lake (USA) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1)

US VIRGIN ISLANDS

2016 Championship Final

Feb 14: Helenites 2 Raymix 3.

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND

2015-16 Championship Final

Mar 10: Auckland City 2 Team Wellington 4 (aet).

SOLOMON ISLANDS

2015-16 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S Warriors (C)	15	12	3	0	54	6	39
Marist Fire	15	9	2	4	20	28	29
Western Utd	14	9	1	4	44	17	28
Malaita Kingz	16	8	1	7	30	22	25
Kossa	14	7	3	4	32	18	24
Koloale	14	4	3	7	15	28	15
Kakamora	16	4	2	10	22	46	14
Guadalcanal	14	3	1	10	10	28	10
West Honiara	14	1	2	11	4	38	5
Hana[1] (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Remaining games not played
[1] *Withdrew before start of season*

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions (R) = relegated

Internationals

FRIENDLIES

Wednesday, February 17
Feb17 - Panama City
Panama 1 (M Gomez 76)
El Salvador 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Davila (Nic)
Panama: A Rodriguez - Patrick, Miller, M Gomez, Escobar, Vargas, Sanchez (Yau 62), Nunez (Gonzalez 62), Cooper (Martinez 78), Macea (Cordoba 57), Clarke (Small 67).
El Salvador: Arroyo - Garcia, Romero (J Barahona 82), Flores Jaco (I Barahona 84), Mendoza, Jimenez (Moran 46), Mayen (Lemus 46), Sagastizado (Renderos 46), Rugamas, Ortiz (Dominguez 71), Larin.

Sunday, February 21
Feb 21 - Providence
Guyana 2 (G Richardson 19, 74)
Surinam 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Johnson (Guy)
Guyana: Murray - Austin, Browne, Nelson (Bobb 69), Grant (Manning 46), K Jacobs, Alleyne (Millington 60), Peters (Lanferman 85), Mills (Wilson 60), G Richardson (Lindie 85), Adams.
Surinam: Kohinor - Darson, Adenie, Nibte, Kwasie, Diporedjo (Pengel 77), Kisoor, Senkye, Pinas (Talea 69), Fer, Esperance.

Feb 21 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 3 (Blanchette 44, Rogers 53, Bertie 79)
Bermuda 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Willett (A&B)
St Kitts & Nevis: Jamal Francis - Hendrickson, T Leader, C Mitchum (R Francis 85), Sargeant, J Leader, Rogers (Freeman 67), Barnes (Jarvis 63), Blanchette (Morton 87), Bertie, O'Loughlin (Duncan 78).
Bermuda: Crockwell - Hill (Smith 84), Raynor, Williams (White 87), Griffith, Elkinson (Coke 72), Donawa, Bascome, Minors (Goater 60), Darrell, A Simmons (Swan 60).

Thursday, February 25
Feb 25 - Remire-Montjoly
French Guiana 2 (Toupouti 84, 89)
Surinam 3 (Fer 21, Kisoor 45, Pinas 48)
HT: 0-2
French Guiana: Apagui - D Atooman, Sawme, Baal, Dorlipo, Torvic, Edwige, Evens, Roman, Alex, Anakaba. *Used subs: Asselas, Toupouti, Decolines, Georgin, S Atooman.*
Surinam: Kohinor - Adenie, Boldewijn, Eind, Kwasie, Nibte, Kisoor, Senkye, Fer, Esperance, Pinas. *Used subs: Talea, Kaise, Pengel, Diporedjo, Fonkel, Stella.*

Saturday, February 27
Feb 27 - Borg El Arab
Egypt 2 (El Said 23, pen 58)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Nour (Egy)
Egypt: A El Shenawy - Gaber (Emam 62), Hegazy, Rabia, Rahil (Tolba 46), M Fathy (Zakaria 53), I Salah, Ghaly (El Sayed 46), El Said (Gomaa 68), Sobhy, Mohsen (Gamal 46).

Wednesday, March 2
Mar 2 - Guatemala City
Guatemala 1 (Marquez 19)
El Salvador 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Matamoros (Hnd)
Guatemala: P Motta - Castrillo, Jimenez, Soto (Fuentes 46), Cardona, Rivas (Aparicio 46), Marquez (Barrientos 76), L Martinez (Salazar 79), Tinoco (Guerra 66), Icute, Ordonez (Longo 67).
El Salvador: H Hernandez - Romero (Renderos 86), Garcia, Mendoza, J Barahona, Jaime Alas, Corea (Burgos 64), Ortiz (Lemus 76), Larin, Mayen, Moran (Jimenez 67).

Wednesday, March 9
Mar 9 - Managua
Nicaragua 1 (Copete 27)
El Salvador 1 (Moran pen 66)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Davila (Nic)
Nicaragua: D Tellez - Casco, Quijano, Rosas (Veliz), Copete (E Tellez), Chavarria (J Lopez), D Reyes (Cuadra), Galeano (Rosales), B Garcia, Coronel, M Montiel. *Sent off: B Garcia 40.*
El Salvador: H Hernandez (Arroyo 46) - Garcia, Dominguez, Romero, J Barahona, R Rivera (Mayen 62), Corea (Ortiz 81), Larin (Sagastizado 56), Lemus (Mendoza 46), Jimenez (I Barahona 62), Renderos (Moran 62). *Sent off: Dominguez 40.*

CENTENNIAL COPA AMERICA

To be played in the United States,June 2016

Draw & match schedule

Group A
Colombia
Costa Rica
Paraguay
United States

Jun 3 USA v Colombia (Santa Clara)
Jun 4 Costa Rica v Paraguay (Orlando)
Jun 7 USA v Costa Rica (Chicago)
Colombia v Paraguay (Pasadena)
Jun 11 USA v Paraguay (Philadelphia)
Colombia v Costa Rica (Houston)

Group B
Brazil
Ecuador
Haiti
Peru

Jun 4 Haiti v Peru (Seattle)
Brazil v Ecuador (Pasadena)
Jun 8 Brazil v Haiti (Orlando)
Ecuador v Peru (Glendale)
Jun 12 Ecuador v Haiti (East Rutherford)
Brazil v Peru (Foxborough)

Group C
Jamaica
Mexico
Uruguay
Venezuela

Jun 5 Jamaica v Venezuela (Chicago)
Mexico v Uruguay (Glendale)
Jun 9 Uruguay v Venezuela (Philadelphia)
Mexico v Jamaica (Pasadena)
Jun 13 Mexico v Venezuela (Houston)
Uruguay v Jamaica (Santa Clara)

Group D
Argentina
Bolivia
Chile
Panama

Jun 6 Panama v Bolivia (Orlando)
Argentina v Chile (Santa Clara)
Jun 10 Chile v Bolivia (Foxborough)
Argentina v Panama (Chicago)
Jun 14 Chile v Panama (Philadelphia)
Argentina v Bolivia (Seattle)

● *The top 2 in each group qualify for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals
Jun 16 Gp A 1st v Gp B 2nd (Seattle) (QF1)
Jun 17 Gp B 1st v Gp A 2nd (E Ruth'ford) (QF2)
Jun 18 Gp D 1st v Gp C 2nd (Foxboro') (QF3)
Gp C 1st v Gp D 2nd (Santa Clara) (QF4)

Semi-finals
Jun 21 QF1 winners v QF3 winners (Houston)
Jun 22 QF2 winners v QF4 winners (Chicago)

3rd-place match
Jun 25 (Glendale)

Final
Jun 26 (East Rutherford)

USA: MLS

CHICAGO FIRE

GOALKEEPERS
25 Sean **JOHNSON** (26) 31.05.89
28 Matt **LAMPSON** (26) 06.09.89
23 Patrick **MCLAIN** (27) 22.08.88

DEFENDERS
16 Jonathan **CAMPBELL** (22) 27.06.93
22 Patrick **DOODY** (23) 22.04.92
6 Eric **GEHRIG** (28) 15.12.87
5 Michael **HARRINGTON** (30) 24.01.86
4 Johan **KAPPELHOF** (Hol) (25) 05.08.90
66 Joao **MEIRA** (Por) (28) 30.04.87
13 Rodrigo **RAMOS** (Bra) (19) 14.01.97
3 Brandon **VINCENT** (21) 01.05.94

MIDFIELDERS
12 Arturo **ALVAREZ** (EIS) (30) 28.06.85
15 Joey **CALISTRI** (22) 20.11.93
30 Razvan **COCIS** (Rom) (33) 19.02.83
18 Drew **CONNER** (22) 18.02.94
17 Collin **FERNANDEZ** (19) 13.02.97
7 John **GOOSSENS** (Hol) (27) 25.07.88
21 Nick **LABROCCA** (31) 04.12.84
2 Matt **POLSTER** (22) 08.06.93
26 Michael **STEPHENS** (26) 03.04.89

FORWARDS
11 David **ACCAM** (Gha) (25) 28.09.90
9 **GILBERTO** (Bra) (26) 05.06.89
77 Kennedy **IGBOANANIKE** (Nga) (26) 26.03.89

COACH
Veljko **PAUNOVIC** (Ser) (38) 21.08.77

COLORADO RAPIDS

GOALKEEPERS
12 John **BERNER** (25) 14.02.91
30 Chris **FROSCHAUER** (22) 15.02.94
18 Zac **MACMATH** (24) 07.08.91

DEFENDERS
4 Marc **BURCH** (31) 07.05.84
23 Bobby **BURLING** (31) 15.10.84
20 Joseph **GREENSPAN** (23) 12.09.92
94 Marlon **HAIRSTON** (22) 23.03.94
3 Eric **MILLER** (23) 15.01.93
44 Axel **SJOBERG** (Swe) (25) 08.03.91
24 Sean **ST LEDGER** (RoI) (31) 28.12.84
33 Jared **WATTS** (24) 03.02.92
5 Mekeil **WILLIAMS** (T&T) (25) 24.07.90

MIDFIELDERS
- Emmanuel **APPIAH** (Gha) (22) 26.09.93
22 Michael **AZIRA** (Uga) (28) 22.08.87
6 Sam **CRONIN** (29) 12.12.86
- Jermaine **JONES** (34) 03.11.81
10 Marco **PAPPA** (Gtm) (28) 15.11.87
16 Zach **PFEFFER** (21) 06.01.95
8 Dillon **POWERS** (25) 14.02.91
17 Dillon **SERNA** (22) 25.03.94

FORWARDS
14 Dominique **BADJI** (Sen) (23) 16.10.92
29 Caleb **CALVERT** (19) 22.10.96
13 Conor **DOYLE** (24) 13.10.91
9 Kevin **DOYLE** (RoI) (32) 18.09.83
11 Shkelzen **GASHI** (Alb) (27) 15.07.88
21 Luis **SOLIGNAC** (Arg) (25) 16.02.91

COACH
Pablo **MASTROENI** (39) 29.08.76

COLUMBUS CREW

GOALKEEPERS
1 Steve **CLARK** (29) 14.04.86
30 Matt **PACIFICI** (22) 31.08.93
41 Brad **STUVER** (24) 16.04.91

DEFENDERS
25 Harrison **AFFUL** (Gha) (29) 24.07.86
3 Corey **ASHE** (30) 14.03.86
21 Chad **BARSON** (25) 25.02.91
14 Waylon **FRANCIS** (CR) (25) 20.09.90
4 Michael **PARKHURST** (32) 24.01.84
22 Gaston **SAURO** (Arg) (26) 23.02.90
33 Amro **TAREK** (Egy) (23) 17.05.92
2 Tyson **WAHL** (32) 23.02.84

MIDFIELDERS
13 Ethan **FINLAY** (25) 06.08.90
29 Marshall **HOLLINGSWORTH** (23) 06.08.92
16 Hector **JIMENEZ** (27) 03.11.88
7 Emil **LARSEN** (Den) (24) 22.06.91
- Chase **MINTER** (23) 19.08.92
19 Rodrigo **SARAVIA** (Gtm) (23) 22.02.93
8 Mohammed **SAEID** (Swe) (25) 24.12.90
26 Ben **SWANSON** (18) 18.07.97
6 Tony **TCHANI** (Cam) (26) 13.04.89
20 Wil **TRAPP** (23) 15.01.93

FORWARDS
27 Conor **CASEY** (34) 25.07.81
10 Federico **HIGUAIN** (Arg) (31) 25.10.84
23 Kei **KAMARA** (SLe) (31) 01.09.84
17 Ola **KAMARA** (Nor) (26) 15.10.89
11 Cedrick **MABWATI** (DRC) (24) 08.03.92
9 Justin **MERAM** (Irq) (27) 04.12.88

COACH
Gregg **BERHALTER** (42) 01.08.73

DALLAS

GOALKEEPERS
1 Jesse **GONZALEZ** (Mex) (20) 25.05.95
30 Ryan **HERMAN** (22) 18.06.93
18 Chris **SEITZ** (29) 12.03.87

DEFENDERS
31 Maynor **FIGUEROA** (Hon) (32) 02.05.83
33 Aaron **GUILLEN** (22) 23.06.93
14 Atiba **HARRIS** (StK) (31) 09.01.85
24 Matt **HEDGES** (25) 01.04.90
3 Moises **HERNANDEZ** (Gtm) (24) 05.03.92
17 Zach **LOYD** (28) 18.07.87
25 Walker **ZIMMERMAN** (22) 19.05.93

MIDFIELDERS
23 Kellyn **ACOSTA** (20) 24.07.95
21 Michael **BARRIOS** (Col) (24) 21.04.91
11 Fabian **CASTILLO** (Col) (23) 17.06.92
10 Mauro **DIAZ** (Arg) (25) 10.03.91
7 Carlos **GRUEZO** (Ecu) (20) 19.04.95
12 Ryan **HOLLINGSHEAD** (24) 16.04.91
22 Carlos **LIZARAZO** (Col) (24) 06.04.91
20 Juan Esteban **ORTIZ** (Col) (28) 29.08.87
15 Timo **PITTER** (Ger) (23) 01.09.92
77 Mauro **ROSALES** (Arg) (35) 24.02.81
8 Victor **ULLOA** (Mex) (24) 04.03.92
29 Alex **ZENDEJAS** (18) 07.02.98

FORWARDS
13 Tesho **AKINDELE** (Can) (23) 31.03.92
28 Colin **BONNER** (21) 01.05.94
16 Coy **CRAFT** (18) 23.05.97
37 Maximiliano **URRUTI** (Arg) (25) 22.02.91

COACH
Oscar **PAREJA** (Col) (47) 10.08.68

DC UNITED

GOALKEEPERS
50 Andrew **DYKSTRA** (30) 02.01.86
28 Bill **HAMID** (25) 25.11.90
- Charlie **HORTON** (21) 14.09.94
48 Travis **WORRA** (22) 09.04.93

DEFENDERS
15 Steve **BIRNBAUM** (25) 23.01.91
32 Bobby **BOSWELL** (33) 15.03.83
5 Sean **FRANKLIN** (31) 21.03.85
2 Taylor **KEMP** (25) 23.07.90
22 Chris **KORB** (28) 08.10.87
34 Luke **MISHU** (24) 26.06.91
6 Kofi **OPARE** (Gha) (25) 12.10.90
20 Jalen **ROBINSON** (21) 08.05.94

MIDFIELDERS
11 Luciano **ACOSTA** (Arg) (21) 31.05.94
17 Miguel **AGUILAR** (Mex) (22) 30.08.93
33 Julian **BUSCHER** (Ger) (22) 22.04.93
16 Paul **CLOWES** (Eng) (22) 27.12.93
14 Nick **DELEON** (25) 17.07.90
4 Markus **HALSTI** (Fin) (32) 19.03.84
25 Jared **JEFFREY** (25) 14.06.90
27 Collin **MARTIN** (21) 09.11.94
13 Lamar **NEAGLE** (28) 07.05.87
7 Marcelo **SARVAS** (Bra) (34) 16.10.81
26 Rob **VINCENT** (Eng) (25) 26.10.90

FORWARDS
10 Fabian **ESPINDOLA** (Arg) (30) 04.05.85
12 Patrick **NYARKO** (Gha) (30) 15.01.86
18 Chris **ROLFE** (33) 17.01.83
9 Alvaro **SABORIO** (CR) (34) 25.03.82

COACH
Ben **OLSEN** (38) 03.05.77

NEW YORK RED BULLS

GOALKEEPERS
18 Ryan **MEARA** (25) 15.11.90
31 Luis **ROBLES** (31) 11.05.84
24 Kyle **REYNISH** (32) 03.11.83

DEFENDERS
3 Gideon **BAAH** (Gha) (25) 01.01.91
20 Justin **BILYEU** (22) 03.02.94
17 Zach **CARROLL** (22) 16.03.94
25 Chris **DUVALL** (24) 10.09.91
5 Connor **LADE** (26) 16.11.89
92 Kemar **LAWRENCE** (Jam) (23) 17.09.92
22 Karl **OUIMETTE** (Can) (23) 18.06.92
55 Damien **PERRINELLE** (Fra) (32) 12.09.83
- Scott **THOMSEN** (22) 31.12.93
23 Ronald **ZUBAR** (Fra) (30) 20.09.85

MIDFIELDERS
4 Tyler **ADAMS** (17) 14.02.99
27 Sean **DAVIS** (23) 08.02.93
7 Derrick **ETIENNE** (Hai) (19) 25.11.96
8 **FELIPE** (Bra) (25) 30.09.90
16 Sacha **KLJESTAN** (30) 09.09.85
11 Dax **MCCARTY** (28) 30.04.87
10 Lloyd **SAM** (Gha) (31) 27.09.84
30 Gonzalo **VERON** (Arg) (26) 24.12.89
98 Shaun **WRIGHT-PHILLIPS** (34) 25.10.81
15 Sal **ZIZZO** (28) 03.04.87

FORWARDS
9 Anatole **ABANG** (Cam) (19) 06.07.96
21 Brandon **ALLEN** (22) 08.10.93
13 Mike **GRELLA** (29) 23.01.87
19 Alex **MUYL** (20) 30.09.95
- Chris **THORSHEIM** (21) 30.06.94
99 Bradley **WRIGHT-PHILLIPS** (Eng) (31) 12.03.85

COACH
Jesse **MARSCH** (42) 08.11.73

ORLANDO CITY

GOALKEEPERS
1 Joe **BENDIK** (26) 25.04.89
36 Earl **EDWARDS JR** (24) 24.01.92
25 Mason **STAJDUHAR** (18) 02.12.97

DEFENDERS
12 Kevin **ALSTON** (27) 05.05.88
14 Luke **BODEN** (Eng) (27) 26.11.88
78 Aurelien **COLLIN** (Fra) (30) 08.03.86
23 Conor **DONOVAN** (20) 08.01.96
3 Seb **HINES** (Eng) (27) 29.05.88
44 David **MATEOS** (Spa) (28) 22.04.87
27 Rafael **RAMOS** (Por) (21) 09.01.95
29 Tommy **REDDING** (19) 24.01.97
2 Tyler **TURNER** (20) 04.03.96

MIDFIELDERS
5 Servando **CARRASCO** (27) 13.08.88
17 Darwin **CEREN** (ESv) (26) 31.12.89
16 Devron **GARCIA** (Hon) (20) 17.02.96
8 Harrison **HEATH** (Eng) (19) 16.04.96
7 Cristian **HIGUITA** (Col) (22) 14.01.94
10 **KAKA** (Bra) (33) 22.04.82
6 Richie **LARYEA** (Can) (21) 07.01.95
18 Kevin **MOLINO** (T&T) (25) 17.06.90
22 Antonio **NOCERINO** (Ita) (30) 09.04.85
15 Pedro **RIBEIRO** (Bra) (25) 13.06.90
11 Carlos **RIVAS** (Col) (21) 15.04.94
20 Brek **SHEA** (26) 28.02.90
32 Adrian **WINTER** (Swi) (29) 08.07.86

FORWARDS
13 Hadji **BARRY** (Gui) (23) 08.12.92
9 Cyle **LARIN** (Can) (20) 17.04.95
35 Bryan **ROCHEZ** (Hon) (21) 01.01.95

COACH
Adrian **HEATH** (Eng) (55) 11.01.61

PHILADELPHIA UNION

GOALKEEPERS
1 Andre **BLAKE** (Jam) (25) 21.11.90
24 Matt **JONES** (Eng) (29) 11.05.86
27 John **MCCARTHY** (23) 04.07.92

DEFENDERS
23 Anderson **CONCEICAO** (Bra) (26) 24.10.89
2 Warren **CREAVALLE** (25) 14.08.90
33 **FABINHO** (Bra) (31) 16.03.85
28 Ray **GADDIS** (26) 13.01.90
16 Richie **MARQUEZ** (23) 26.05.92
12 Keegan **ROSENBERRY** (22) 11.12.93
4 Ken **TRIBBETT** (23) 25.08.92
3 Taylor **WASHINGTON** (22) 16.08.93
15 Josh **YARO** (Gha) (21) 18.11.94

MIDFIELDERS
6 Roland **ALBERG** (Hol) (25) 06.08.90
14 Eric **AYUK** (Cam) (19) 17.02.97
10 Tranquillo **BARNETTA** (Swi) (30) 22.05.85
7 Brian **CARROLL** (34) 20.07.81
8 Maurice **EDU** (29) 18.04.86
22 Leo **FERNANDES** (24) 23.12.91
11 Fabian **HERBERS** (Ger) (22) 17.08.93
25 **ILSINHO** (Bra) (30) 12.10.85
- Michael **LAHOUD** (SLe) (29) 15.09.86
19 Cole **MISSIMO** (23) 15.02.93
5 Vincent **NOGUEIRA** (Fra) (28) 16.01.88
13 Chris **PONTIUS** (28) 12.05.87
20 Walter **RESTREPO** (Col) (27) 21.06.88

FORWARDS
9 Sebastien **LE TOUX** (Fra) (32) 10.01.84
17 CJ **SAPONG** (27) 27.12.88

COACH
Jim **CURTIN** (36) 23.06.79

PORTLAND TIMBERS

GOALKEEPERS
90 Jake **GLEESON** (NZ) (25) 26.06.90
33 Wade **HAMILTON** (21) 15.09.94
12 Adam **LARSEN KWARASEY** (Gha) (28) 12.12.87

DEFENDERS
7 Nat **BORCHERS** (34) 13.04.81
15 Chris **KLUTE** (26) 05.03.90
35 Anthony **MANNING** (23) 04.09.92
20 Taylor **PEAY** (24) 05.09.91
2 Alvas **POWELL** (Jam) (21) 18.07.94
24 Liam **RIDGEWELL** (Eng) (31) 21.07.84
4 Jermaine **TAYLOR** (Jam) (31) 14.01.85
28 Andy **THOMA** (22) 29.04.93
16 Zarek **VALENTIN** (24) 06.08.91

MIDFIELDERS
11 Dairon **ASPRILLA** (Col) (23) 25.05.92
- Jack **BARMBY** (Eng) (21) 14.11.94
27 Nick **BESLER** (22) 07.05.93
25 Neco **BRETT** (Jam) (24) 22.03.92
21 Diego **CHARA** (Col) (29) 05.04.86
10 Ned **GRABAVOY** (32) 01.07.83
13 Jack **JEWSBURY** (34) 13.04.81
6 Darlington **NAGBE** (25) 19.07.90
8 Diego **VALERI** (Arg) (29) 01.05.86
14 Ben **ZEMANSKI** (27) 12.05.88

FORWARDS
9 Fanendo **ADI** (Nga) (25) 10.10.90
99 Jack **MCINERNEY** (23) 05.08.92
26 Lucas **MELANO** (Arg) (23) 01.03.93
19 Ben **POLK** (23) 19.09.92
31 Michael **SEATON** (Jam) (19) 01.05.96

COACH
Caleb **PORTER** (41) 18.02.75

REAL SALT LAKE

GOALKEEPERS
24 Jeff **ATTINELLA** (27) 29.09.88
1 Lalo **FERNANDEZ** (Mex) (23) 16.12.92
18 Nick **RIMANDO** (36) 17.06.79
- Connor **SPARROW** (21) 10.05.94

DEFENDERS
2 Tony **BELTRAN** (28) 11.10.87
15 Justen **GLAD** (19) 28.02.97
3 Phanuel **KAVITA** (DRC) (23) 09.03.93
- Max **LACHOWECKI** (23) 30.06.92
21 Aaron **MAUND** (25) 19.09.90
6 Boyd **OKWUONU** (23) 24.02.93
4 Jamison **OLAVE** (Col) (34) 21.04.81
17 Demar **PHILLIPS** (Jam) (32) 23.09.83
16 Chris **WINGERT** (33) 16.06.82

MIDFIELDERS
25 Danilo **ACOSTA** (Hon) (18) 07.11.97
70 Jordan **ALLEN** (20) 25.04.95
- Amass **AMANKONA** (Gha) (20) 02.08.95
5 Kyle **BECKERMAN** (33) 23.04.82
11 Javier **MORALES** (Arg) (36) 10.01.80
19 Luke **MULHOLLAND** (Eng) (27) 07.08.88
26 Adolfo **OVALLE** (Chl) (18) 28.04.97
27 John **STERTZER** (25) 04.10.90
8 Stephen **SUNDAY** (Nga) (27) 17.09.88

FORWARDS
80 Olmes **GARCIA** (Col) (23) 21.10.92
12 Omar **HOLNESS** (Jam) (22) 13.03.94
7 Juan Manuel **MARTINEZ** (Arg) (30) 25.10.85
14 Yura **MOVSISYAN** (Arm) (28) 02.08.87
10 Joao **PLATA** (Ecu) (24) 01.03.92
49 Devon **SANDOVAL** (24) 16.06.91
30 Emery **WELSHMAN** (Guy) (24) 09.11.91

COACH
Jeff **CASSAR** (42) 02.02.74

HOUSTON DYNAMO

GOALKEEPERS
24 Calle **BROWN** (23) 01.07.92
1 Tyler **DERIC** (27) 30.08.88
31 Joe **WILLIS** (27) 10.08.88

DEFENDERS
4 **AGUS** (Spa) (30) 03.05.85
2 Jalil **ANIBABA** (27) 19.10.88
7 DaMarcus **BEASLEY** (33) 24.05.82
30 Bradley **BOURGEOIS** (21) 13.04.94
18 David **HORST** (30) 25.10.85
34 Sebastien **IBEAGHA** (24) 21.01.92
20 Abdoulie **MANSALLY** (Gam) (27) 27.01.89
5 Raul **RODRIGUEZ** (Spa) (28) 22.09.87
22 Sheanon **WILLIAMS** (25) 17.03.90

MIDFIELDERS
14 **ALEX** (Bra) (27) 15.12.88
13 Ricardo **CLARK** (33) 10.02.83
27 Boniek **GARCIA** (Hon) (31) 04.09.84
3 Rob **LOVEJOY** (24) 23.10.91
- Christian **LUCATERO** (18) 17.06.97
8 Cristian **MAIDANA** (Arg) (29) 24.01.87
33 Leonel **MIRANDA** (Arg) (22) 07.01.94
6 David **ROCHA** (Spa) (31) 07.02.85
21 Zach **STEINBERGER** (23) 10.05.92
26 Collen **WARNER** (27) 24.06.88

FORWARDS
10 Giles **BARNES** (Jam) (27) 05.08.88
12 Will **BRUIN** (26) 24.10.89
19 Mauro **MANOTAS** (Col) (20) 15.07.95
9 Erick **TORRES** (Mex) (23) 19.01.93
11 Andrew **WENGER** (25) 25.12.90

COACH
Owen **COYLE** (Sco) (49) 14.07.66

LA GALAXY

GOALKEEPERS
31 Clement **DIOP** (Fra) (22) 12.10.93
1 Dan **KENNEDY** (33) 22.07.82
12 Brian **ROWE** (27) 16.11.88

DEFENDERS
3 Ashley **COLE** (Eng) (35) 20.12.80
20 AJ **DELAGARZA** (Gum) (28) 04.11.87
22 **LEONARDO** (Bra) (28) 08.02.88
27 Dave **ROMNEY** (22) 12.06.93
36 Oscar **SORTO** (21) 13.08.94
44 Daniel **STERES** (25) 11.11.90
37 Jelle **VAN DAMME** (Blg) (32) 10.10.83

MIDFIELDERS
34 Nigel **DE JONG** (Hol) (31) 30.11.84
25 Rafael **GARCIA** (27) 19.12.88
8 Steven **GERRARD** (Eng) (35) 30.05.80
6 Baggio **HUSIDIC** (Bos) (28) 19.05.87
21 Jeff **LARENTOWICZ** (32) 05.08.83
17 Sebastian **LLETGET** (23) 03.09.92
18 Mike **MAGEE** (31) 02.09.84
14 Robbie **ROGERS** (28) 12.05.87
5 Jose **VILLARREAL** (22) 10.09.93

FORWARDS
24 Emmanuel **BOATENG** (Gha) (22) 17.01.94
10 Giovani **DOS SANTOS** (Mex) (26) 11.05.89
9 Alan **GORDON** (34) 16.10.81
38 Bradford **JAMIESON IV** (19) 18.10.96
7 Robbie **KEANE** (RoI) (35) 08.07.80
46 Ariel **LASSITER** (CR) (21) 27.09.94
40 Raul **MENDIOLA** (Mex) (21) 18.05.94
11 Gyasi **ZARDES** (24) 02.09.91

COACH
Bruce **ARENA** (64) 21.09.51

MONTREAL IMPACT

GOALKEEPERS
1 Evan **BUSH** (29) 06.04.86
40 Maxime **CREPEAU** (Can) (21) 11.05.94
22 Eric **KRONBERG** (32) 07.06.83

DEFENDERS
36 Victor **CABRERA** (Arg) (23) 07.02.93
6 Hassoun **CAMARA** (Fra) (32) 03.02.84
23 Laurent **CIMAN** (Blg) (30) 05.08.85
26 Kyle **FISHER** (21) 19.06.94
5 Wandrille **LEFEVRE** (Can) (26) 17.12.89
2 Ambroise **OYONGO** (Cam) (24) 22.06.91
25 Donny **TOIA** (23) 28.05.92

MIDFIELDERS
29 Eric **ALEXANDER** (27) 14.04.88
18 Kyle **BEKKER** (Can) (25) 02.09.90
8 Patrice **BERNIER** (Can) (36) 23.09.79
33 Marco **DONADEL** (Ita) (32) 21.04.83
28 Jeremy **GAGNON-LAPARE** (Can) (21) 09.03.95
16 Calum **MALLACE** (Sco) (25) 01.10.90
32 Lucas **ONTIVERO** (Arg) (21) 09.09.94
10 Ignacio **PIATTI** (Arg) (31) 04.02.85
15 Andres **ROMERO** (Arg) (26) 29.10.89
14 Harry **SHIPP** (24) 07.11.91
51 Maxim **TISSOT** (Can) (23) 13.04.92
27 Johan **VENEGAS** (CR) (27) 11.07.88

FORWARDS
11 Didier **DROGBA** (IvC) (38) 11.03.78
24 Anthony **JACKSON-HAMEL** (Can) (22) 03.08.93
7 Dominic **ODURO** (Gha) (30) 13.08.85
39 Cameron **PORTER** (22) 23.05.93
19 Michael **SALAZAR** (Blz) (23) 15.11.92
- Romario **WILLIAMS** (Jam) (21) 15.08.94

COACH
Mauro **BIELLO** (Can) (43) 08.08.72

NEW ENGLAND REV

GOALKEEPERS
18 Brad **KNIGHTON** (31) 06.02.85
22 Bobby **SHUTTLEWORTH** (28) 13.05.87
- Matt **TURNER** (21) 24.06.94

DEFENDERS
25 Darrius **BARNES** (29) 24.12.86
2 Andrew **FARRELL** (23) 02.04.92
23 Jose **GONCALVES** (Por) (30) 17.09.85
3 Jordan **MCCRARY** (22) 28.07.93
40 **SAMBINHA** (GuB) (23) 23.09.92
28 London **WOODBERRY** (24) 28.05.91

MIDFIELDERS
6 Scott **CALDWELL** (25) 15.03.91
14 Diego **FAGUNDEZ** (Uru) (21) 14.02.95
21 Zachary **HERIVAUX** (Hai) (20) 01.02.96
16 Daigo **KOBAYASHI** (Jap) (33) 19.02.83
7 Gershon **KOFFIE** (Gha) (24) 25.08.91
4 Steve **NEUMANN** (24) 07.10.91
24 Lee **NGUYEN** (29) 07.10.86
11 Kelyn **ROWE** (24) 25.12.91
33 Donnie **SMITH** (25) 07.12.90
8 Chris **TIERNEY** (30) 09.01.86
15 Je-Vaughn **WATSON** (Jam) (32) 22.10.83

FORWARDS
17 Juan **AGUDELO** (23) 23.11.92
10 Teal **BUNBURY** (26) 27.02.90
9 Charlie **DAVIES** (29) 25.06.86
- Michael **GAMBLE** (22) 05.01.94

COACH
Jay **HEAPS** (39) 02.08.76

NEW YORK CITY

GOALKEEPERS
25 Eirik **JOHANSEN** (Nor) (23) 12.07.92
24 Andre **RAWLS** (24) 20.12.91
12 Josh **SAUNDERS** (PR) (35) 02.03.81

DEFENDERS
27 RJ **ALLEN** (25) 17.04.90
13 Frederic **BRILLANT** (Fra) (30) 26.06.85
52 Shannon **GOMEZ** (T&T) (19) 05.10.96
2 Jason **HERNANDEZ** (32) 23.08.83
51 Andoni **IRAOLA** (Spa) (33) 22.06.82
30 Diego **MARTINEZ** (Arg) (23) 05.07.92
22 Ronald **MATARRITA** (CR) (21) 09.07.94
23 Jefferson **MENA** (Col) (26) 15.06.89
3 Ethan **WHITE** (25) 01.01.91

MIDFIELDERS
20 Mehdi **BALLOUCHY** (Mor) (32) 06.04.83
16 Connor **BRANDT** (23) 15.09.92
6 Federico **BRAVO** (Arg) (22) 05.10.93
10 Mix **DISKERUD** (25) 02.10.90
11 Jack **HARRISON** (Eng) (19) 20.11.96
4 Andrew **JACOBSON** (26) 25.09.89
8 Frank **LAMPARD** (Eng) (37) 20.06.78
5 Mikey **LOPEZ** (23) 20.02.93
15 Tommy **MCNAMARA** (25) 06.02.91
21 Andrea **PIRLO** (Ita) (36) 19.05.79
88 Kwadwo **POKU** (Gha) (24) 19.02.92

FORWARDS
14 Patrick **MULLINS** (24) 05.02.92
19 Khiry **SHELTON** (22) 26.06.93
99 Tony **TAYLOR** (26) 13.07.89
7 David **VILLA** (Spa) (34) 03.12.81

COACH
Patrick **VIEIRA** (Fra) (39) 23.06.76

SAN JOSE E'QUAKES

GOALKEEPERS
1 David **BINGHAM** (26) 19.10.89
35 Bryan **MEREDITH** (26) 02.08.89
28 Andrew **TARBELL** (22) 07.10.93

DEFENDERS
5 Victor **BERNARDEZ** (Hon) (33) 24.05.82
20 Shaun **FRANCIS** (Jam) (29) 02.10.86
21 Clarence **GOODSON** (33) 17.05.82
32 Andres **IMPERIALE** (Arg) (29) 08.07.86
3 Jordan **STEWART** (Eng) (34) 03.03.82
4 Marvell **WYNNE** (29) 08.05.86

MIDFIELDERS
27 Fatai **ALASHE** (22) 21.10.93
7 Cordell **CATO** (T&T) (23) 15.07.92
18 Kip **COLVEY** (NZ) (22) 15.03.94
49 Simon **DAWKINS** (Jam) (28) 01.12.87
30 Anibal **GODOY** (Pan) (26) 10.02.90
17 Sanna **NYASSI** (Gam) (27) 31.01.89
33 Marc **PELOSI** (21) 17.06.94
10 Matias **PEREZ GARCIA** (Arg) (31) 13.10.84
91 Alberto **QUINTERO** (Pan) (28) 18.12.87
6 Shea **SALINAS** (29) 24.06.86
38 Matheus **SILVA** (Bra) (19) 08.12.96
22 Tommy **THOMPSON** (20) 15.08.95

FORWARDS
25 Quincy **AMARIKWA** (28) 29.10.87
19 Chad **BARRETT** (30) 30.04.85
11 Innocent **EMEGHARA** (Swi) (26) 27.05.89
14 Adam **JAHN** (25) 05.01.91
24 Steven **LENHART** (29) 28.08.86
12 Mark **SHERROD** (25) 13.08.90
8 Chris **WONDOLOWSKI** (33) 28.01.83

COACH
Dominic **KINNEAR** (48) 26.07.67

SEATTLE SOUNDERS

GOALKEEPERS
24 Stefan **FREI** (Swi) (29) 20.04.86
22 Charlie **LYON** (23) 10.04.92
1 Tyler **MILLER** (23) 12.03.93

DEFENDERS
25 Tony **ALFARO** (22) 15.06.93
3 Brad **EVANS** (30) 20.04.85
33 Joevin **JONES** (T&T) (24) 03.08.91
14 Chad **MARSHALL** (31) 22.08.84
4 Tyrone **MEARS** (Eng) (33) 18.02.83
- Michael **NELSON** (21) 08.08.94
15 Dylan **REMICK** (24) 19.05.91
20 Zach **SCOTT** (35) 02.07.80
29 Roman **TORRES** (30) 20.03.86

MIDFIELDERS
- Emir **ALIHODZIC** (22) 02.09.93
6 Osvaldo **ALONSO** (Cub) (30) 11.11.85
12 Michael **FARFAN** (27) 23.06.88
91 Oniel **FISHER** (Jam) (24) 22.11.91
8 Erik **FRIBERG** (Swe) (30) 10.02.86
23 Andreas **IVANSCHITZ** (Aut) (32) 15.10.83
11 Aaron **KOVAR** (22) 14.08.93
- Zach **MATHERS** (21) 14.04.94
7 Cristian **ROLDAN** (20) 03.06.95
18 Nathan **STURGIS** (28) 06.07.87

FORWARDS
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99 Andy **CRAVEN** (24) 21.01.92
2 Clint **DEMPSEY** (33) 09.03.83
17 Darwin **JONES** (23) 04.04.92
80 Victor **MANSARAY** (19) 22.02.97
13 Jordan **MORRIS** (21) 26.10.94
16 Nelson **VALDEZ** (Par) (32) 28.11.83

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29 Tim **MELIA** (29) 15.05.86

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5 Matt **BESLER** (29) 11.02.87
12 Nuno **ANDRE COELHO** (Por) (30) 07.01.86
13 Amadou **DIA** (22) 08.06.93
4 Kevin **ELLIS** (24) 30.06.91
7 Chance **MYERS** (28) 07.12.87
3 Ike **OPARA** (27) 21.02.89
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27 Roger **ESPINOZA** (Hon) (29) 25.10.86
10 Benny **FEILHABER** (31) 19.01.85
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94 Jimmy **MEDRANDA** (Col) (22) 07.02.94
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9 Diego **RUBIO** (Chl) (22) 15.05.93
30 Daniel **SALLOI** (Hun) (19) 19.07.96

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40 Quillan **ROBERTS** (Can) (21) 13.09.94

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6 Nick **HAGGLUND** (25) 14.09.90
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24 Damien **PERQUIS** (Pol) (31) 10.04.84
38 Clement **SIMONIN** (Fra) (24) 01.07.91
23 Josh **WILLIAMS** (27) 18.04.88
15 Eriq **ZAVALETA** (23) 02.08.92

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8 Benoit **CHEYROU** (Fra) (34) 03.05.81
18 Marky **DELGADO** (20) 16.05.95
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19 Daniel **LOVITZ** (24) 27.08.91
20 Chris **MANNELLA** (Can) (21) 07.06.94
21 Jonathan **OSORIO** (Can) (23) 12.06.92

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11 Molham **BABOULI** (Can) (23) 02.01.93
9 Tsubasa **ENDOH** (Jap) (22) 20.08.93
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- Herculez **GOMEZ** (33) 06.04.82
22 Jordan **HAMILTON** (Can) (20) 17.03.96

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70 Paolo **TORNAGHI** (Ita) (27) 21.06.88

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8 Fraser **AIRD** (Can) (21) 02.02.95
22 Christian **DEAN** (22) 14.03.93
2 Jordan **HARVEY** (31) 28.01.84
44 Pa Modou **KAH** (Nor) (35) 30.07.80
26 Tim **PARKER** (22) 23.02.93
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23 Kekuta **MANNEH** (Gam) (21) 30.12.94
33 Nicolas **MEZQUIDA** (Uru) (24) 21.01.92
30 Ben **MCKENDRY** (Can) (23) 25.03.93
77 Pedro **MORALES** (Chl) (30) 25.05.85
13 Cristian **TECHERA** (Uru) (23) 31.05.92
31 Russell **TEIBERT** (Can) (23) 22.12.92

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9 Masato **KUDO** (Jap) (25) 06.05.90
11 Darren **MATTOCKS** (Jam) (25) 02.09.90
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(ages as of 25.03.16)

World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

MAY 2, 1962, AMSTERDAM: EUROPEAN CUP FINAL

Benfica 5 Real Madrid 3

Portuguese holders fight back to deny Spaniards a sixth crown

Double...Eusebio scored twice

The seventh staging of the European Champions Cup Final saw a coming together of two clubs that had won the previous six Finals between them.

While Real Madrid had won the first five tournaments, Benfica were reigning champions. And it was the Spaniards who looked like recording a sixth title when they swept to a two-goal lead, thanks to Hungarian goal machine Ferenc Puskas. Benfica hit back and were level within 12 minutes, only for the mighty Puskas, again assisted by the influential Alfredo Di Stefano, to restore Real's lead and complete his hat-trick before half-time.

"But," as Gordon Jeffrey wrote in the July 1962 edition of *World Soccer*, "this was Real's last fling. Coluna with a great shot soon equalised and then Eusebio scored twice, to put Benfica firmly on top."

Soon after the break Real Madrid's Pedro Casado, as Eric Batty added, "limped out of a tackle and never ran again". And in the days of no substitutes, this was, Batty claimed, "the turning point in the match".

Benfica took control through the darting, probing, creative play of Mario Coluna, while the man-marking Domiciano Cavem nullified Di Stefano in a ploy hatched during the interval by Benfica's wily old fox of a coach, Bela Guttmann.

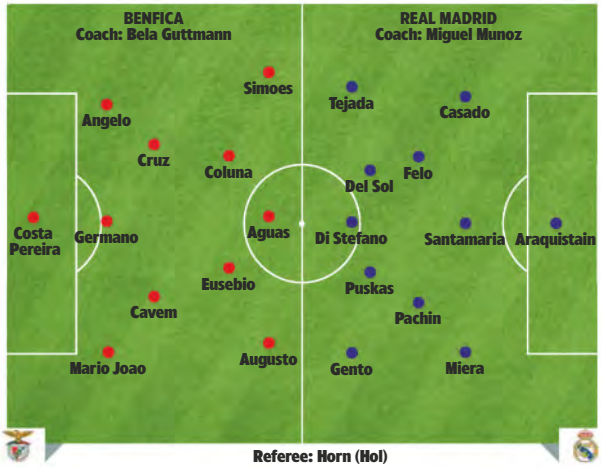
A young Eusebio then took over as Real, with a shaky Jose Araquistain in goal and the normally reliable Francisco Gento having a poor game, began to fade.

Jeffrey concluded: "For the great Hungarian [Puskas] it must have been a time of tragedy to equal that sad afternoon when West Germany plucked from Hungary the World Cup in 1954.

"Then Puskas shared the disappointment of feeling the numerous great Hungarian victories set to nought by a single defeat.

"Now he scored a first-half hat-trick in a European Cup Final – and still ended on the losing side." WS

Floored...Real Madrid's Alfredo Di Stefano



Referee: Horn (Hol)

KEY MOMENTS

Opener...Ferenc Puskas puts Madrid ahead

17min
Ferenc Puskas controls a volleyed pass from Alfredo Di Stefano, advances 50 yards and fires low into the corner. **0-1**

23min
Puskas extends Real Madrid's lead with a swerving 30-yard shot. **0-2**

25min
A shot from Eusebio comes back off the post and Jose Aguas taps in the rebound. **1-2**

34min
Domiciano Cavem fires in the equaliser following a deflected shot from Aguas. **2-2**

38min
Di Stefano sets up Puskas for his hat-trick. **2-3**

51min
Mario Coluna equalises with a 25-yard shot. **3-3**

65min
After being brought down in the penalty area, Eusebio picks himself up and converts the spot-kick and gives Benfica the lead for the first time in the game. **4-3**

68min
Coluna taps a short free-kick to Eusebio who fires home from 30-yards. **5-3**

In front...Eusebio gives Benfica the lead

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